# WARLANDS

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#1 THE FALL OF SHAL'HAZAR

WARLANDS VOL 1 CHAPTER #1

# WARLANDS

CREATED BY
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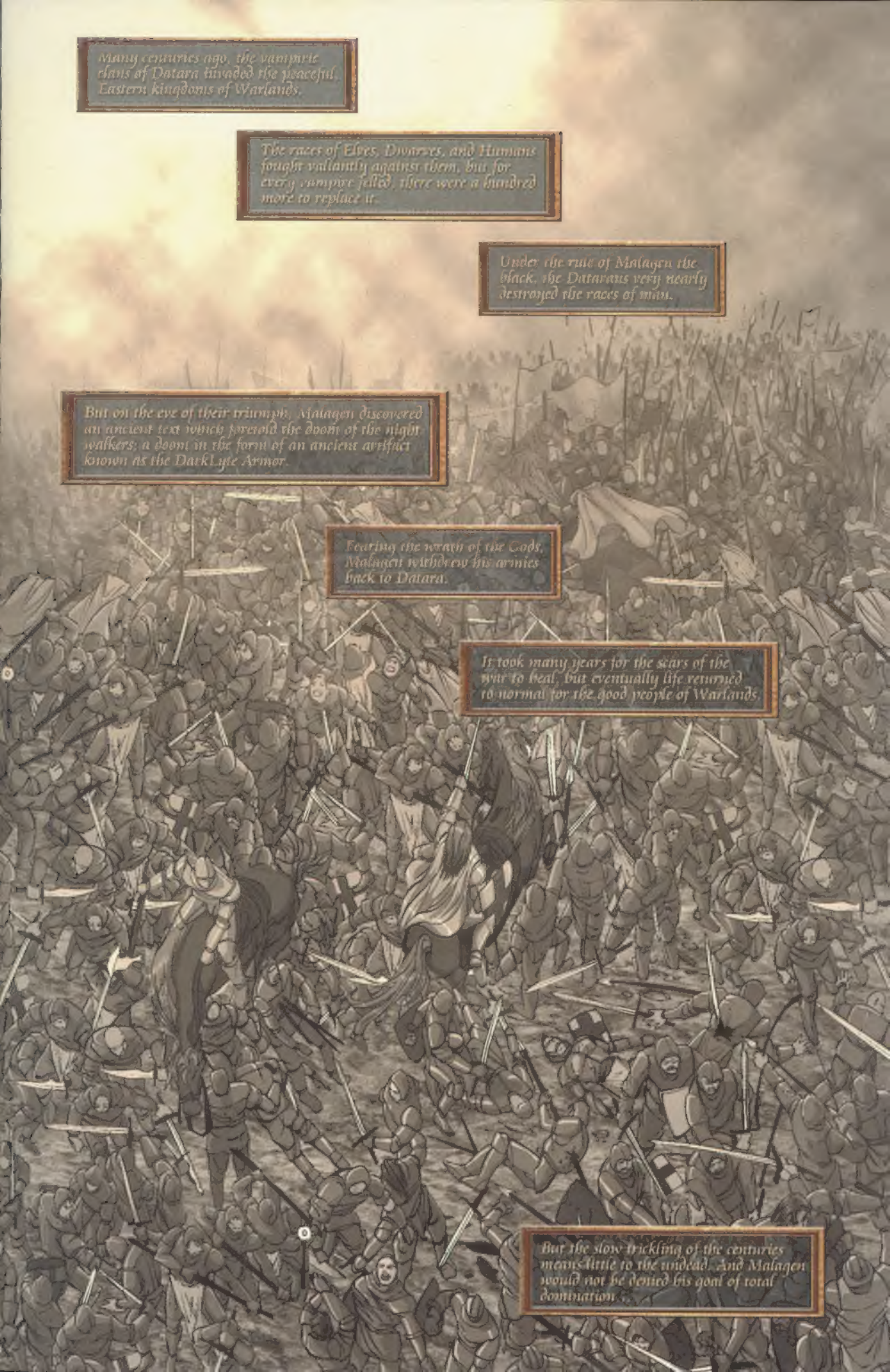

Many centuries ago, the vampiric clans of Datara invaded the peaceful Eastern kingdoms of Warlands.
The races of Elves, Dwarves, and Humans fought valiantly against them, but for every vampire felled, there were a hundred more to replace it.
Under the rule of Malagen the black, the Dataraus very nearly destroyed the races of man.
But on the eve of their triumph, Malagen discovered an ancient text which foretold the doom of the night walkers; a doom in the form of an ancient artifact known as the DarkLight Armor.
Fearing the wrath of the Gods, Malagen withdrew his armies back to Datara.
It took many years for the scars of the war to heal, but eventually life returned to normal for the good people of Warlands.
But the slow trickling of the centuries means little to the undead. And Malagen would not be denied his goal of total domination...

Shal Hazar Castle
10 Leagues north of the Myrish border.
I TAKE IT YOUR PATROL WAS UNEVENTFUL JERELL?
BAH..DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW AWFUL & SOAKING WET HORSES SMELL?
TALENTED UNDERSTATEMENT. ABOUT THE ONLY THING COMING UP FROM THE SOUTH ARE STORM CLOUDS.
MAYBE THE DATARAN MOBILIZATION IS JUST A RUMOR AFTER ALL.
PERHAPS, BUT STAY ALERT AND CONCENTRATE ON YOUR DUTIES. IF AN ATTACK COMES WE'LL BE THE FIRST ONES TO SEE IT.
CAPTAIN PENDAR!
TWO SHIPS IN THE HARBOR APPROACHING FAST!
WHAT KIND?
DON'T KNOW, THEY'RE NOT VERY LARGE THOUGH, PROBABLY STRAY FISHING BOATS FROM DOWN THE COAST.
THEY'RE HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE ROCKS.
GET A MAN OUT THERE ON THE WATER AND GET THOSE SHIPS TO TURN AROUND.
YES SIR.

...GET ME SOME ALE WYNDON..GO GATHER SOME FIREWOOD WYNDON... GO OUT IN A ROW BOAT AND WARN THE FISHING BOAT ABOUT THE REEF WYNDON...
*SIGH*...IF I'D KNOWN MILITARY SERVICE WOULD BE LIKE THIS I'D HAVE BEEN A PIG FARMER INSTEAD.
HELLURRRRRR
SKLURCH!
HEEEEEELLLLOOO THERE!!!! TUUUURN BAAACK!!!
DAMN...
CAAAAN YOU HEEEAAR MEEEEE???
SPLOOSH!

I DON'T SEE THE SHIP. GODS... I CAN *BARELY* SEE MY OWN HANDS IN THIS FOG.
HAVE WE RECEIVED ANY WORD FROM THE MAN WE SENT OUT?
NO, NOTHING YET.
THERE IT IS...DOESN'T LOOK LIKE *ANY* FISHING BOAT I'VE EVER SEEN THOUGH..
THAT'S NO BOAT.
I WANT *EVERY* MAN THAT CAN DRAW A BOW ON THE WALL NOW!
BRING THE SUPPLIES INSIDE THE PERIMETER AND *BRING* THE SIEGE ENGINES UP TO THE TOWERS.
NOW MAN! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!

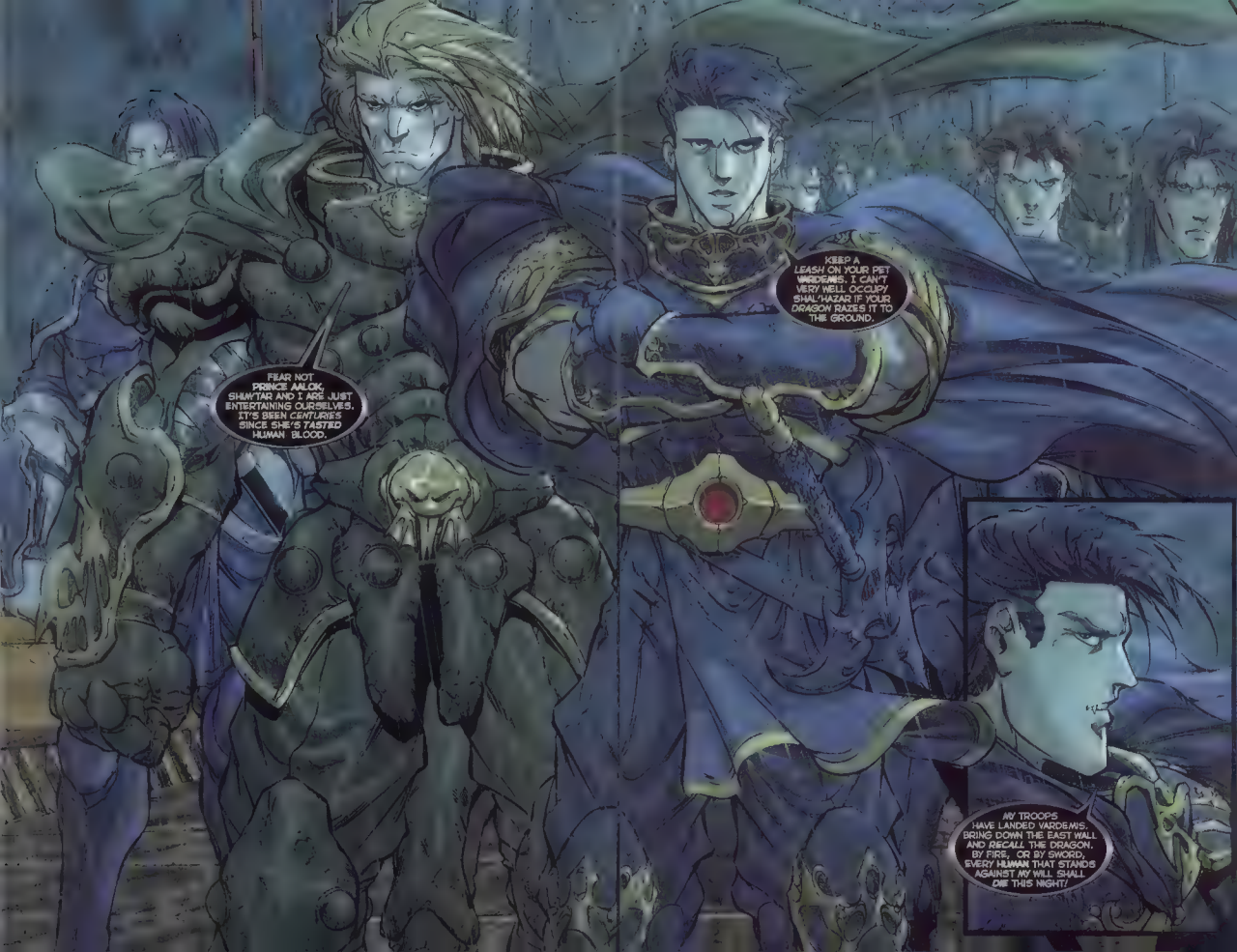
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE MYRISH ARMY YOU ARE ORDERED TO REVERSE COURSE!
MY GOD...
FWOOOOOM!
RUN!
OOF!

CAPTAIN PENDAR!!!
TAKE COVER!!!

*GASP*!
GET BACK INSIDE GIRL! IT'S NOT SAF...
DOOR'S BLOCKED OFF... FLOOR CAVING IN...NO WAY OUT EXCEPT...
DOWN!!!!

KRRRRR!
KRAK!!
NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS HUMAN! WE HAVE TO GET INSIDE...
AN ELF? HOW IS IT THAT...

I GUESS IT WAS A BIT *WISHFUL* OF ME TO THINK THAT NOISE WAS **THUNDER** EH ZEPH?
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON
HOLY TANNIA GODDESS OF GOODNESS AND LIFE, SHINE YOUR *LIGHT* INTO THE DARKNESS AND *REVEAL* IT'S SHADOWS...
WE HAVE TO *GET* OUT OF HERE NOW..


FEAR NOT, PRINCE AALOK, SHAW'TAR AND I ARE JUST ENTERTAINING OURSELVES. IT'S BEEN *CENTURIES* SINCE SHE'S *TASTED* HUMAN BLOOD.
KEEP A LEASH ON YOUR PET VARDEMUS, I CAN'T VERY WELL OCCUPY SHAL'HAZAR IF YOUR DRAGON RAZES IT TO THE GROUND.
MY TROOPS HAVE LANDED VARDEMUS. BRING DOWN THE EAST WALL AND *RECALL* THE DRAGON. BY FIRE, OR BY SWORD, EVERY HUMAN THAT STANDS AGAINST MY WILL SHALL *DIE* THIS NIGHT!

THEY'RE TOO MANY OF THEM!!! GET BACK INTO THE CASTLE!!!
THAT DOOR WON'T HOLD THEM OFF FOR LONG!!!
WHERE ARE THE REST OF OUR REINFORCEMENTS??? WHERE'S CAPTAIN PENDAR?
THE CAPTAINS DEAD! WE'VE BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE MAIN FORCE...IT'S UP TO US TO HOLD THE INNER CASTLE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE!

I WOULDN'T GO THIS WAY IF I WERE YOU MY FRIENDS, THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE CASTLE HAS A SLIGHT...
...VERMIN PROBLEM...
BACK TO THE LOWER LEVELS!
NOT TO BE AN *ALARMIST*, BUT IS ANYONE ELSE CONCERNED THAT WE'RE RAPIDLY GETTING *FARTHER* AND *FARTHER* AWAY FROM ANY EXITS?
HE'S RIGHT.. WE'VE GOT TO *STOP* THIS...

GET TO THE DOOR!
GLL
THESE ARE VAMPIRES HUMAN, AIM FOR THE HEART NEXT TIME, YOU MIGHT LIVE LONGER...

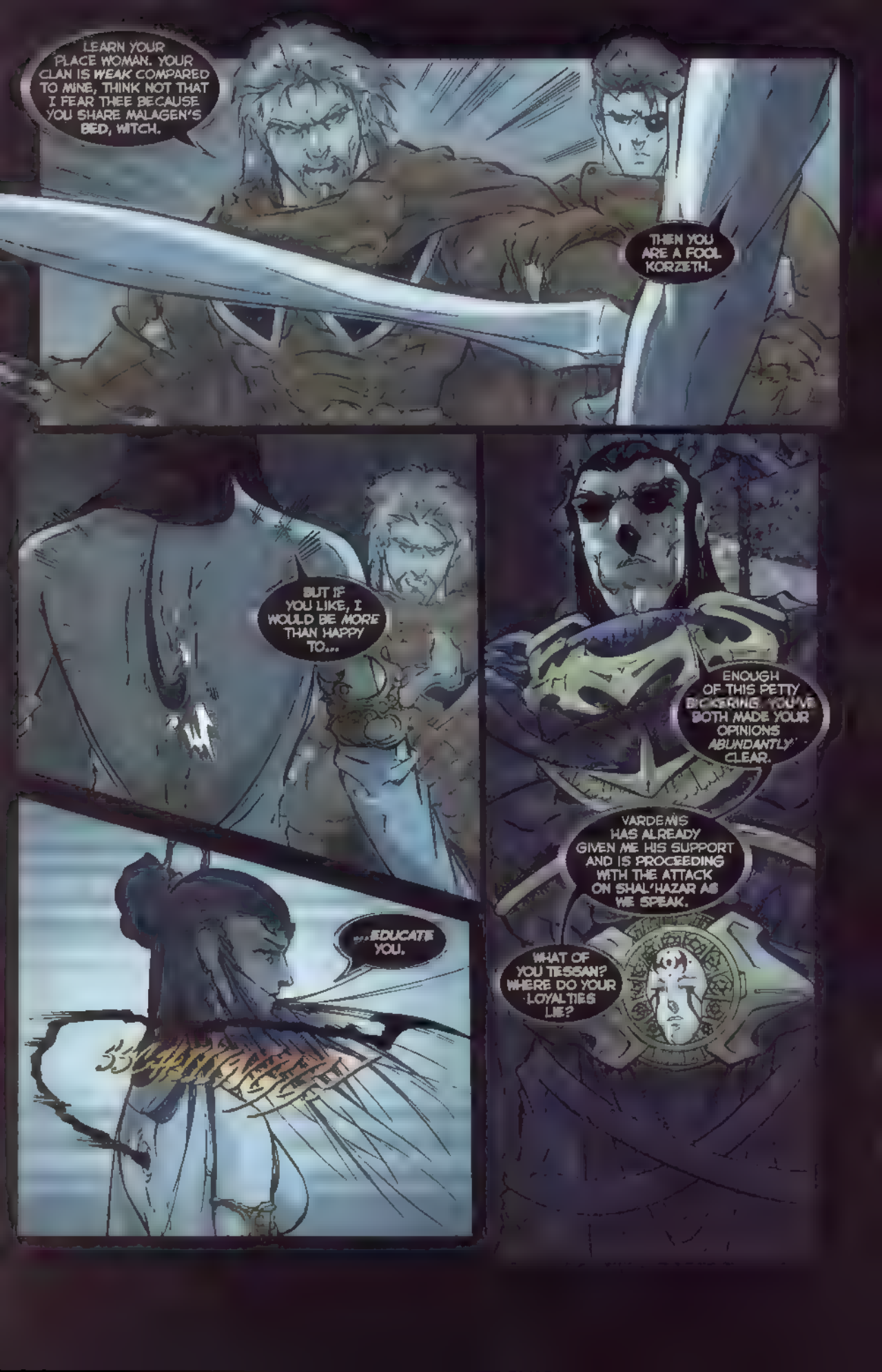
UNLESS ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS, LIVING LONGER ISN'T GOING TO PRESENT MUCH OF A PROBLEM...
OPEN THE DOOR!

CAPTAIN!!! YOU'RE
I WON'T BE FOR LONG IF YOU DON'T CLOSE THAT DOOR!
BUT HOW?
HAH...IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A DRAGON TO KILL ME BOY. KAFF..KAFF..
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
YOU'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE -- AS FOR ME, I THINK I'LL STAY AND ENTERTAIN OUR GUESTS..
I WON'T LEAVE YOU HERE!
USE YOUR HEAD JERELL! THE CASTLE IS LOST. THE EASTERN WALL IS DOWN.
ALL OUR LINES OF ESCAPE AND RESUPPLY ARE CUT OFF...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE DATARANS SECURE THE ENTIRE PENNINSULA...
SOMEONE HAS TO GET BACK TO SONADORA AND TELL THE KING WHAT'S HAPPENING...
I TOLD YOU CAPTAIN, I'M NOT...
THAT WASN'T A QUESTION. AND THIS ISN'T OPEN FOR DEBATE.

THERE SHOULD BE AN IRON GRATING ALONG THE WALL SOMEWHERE BEHIND THOSE BARRELS.
YOU CAN GET INTO THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM IF YOU CAN GET INSIDE.
JUST FOLLOW THE CURRENT, YOU SHOULD COME OUT SOMEWHERE BEHIND THE ENEMY LINE. I'LL STAY HERE AND MAKE SURE YOU AREN'T FOLLOWED
FOUND IT...
CAPTAIN... I...
JUST GO JERELL. BY THE GODS, IF WE ALL DIE HERE, IT WILL NOT BE FOR NOTHING.

CRACK!
COME ON THEN. I DON'T HAVE ALL NIGHT

I'LL NOT BE YOUR PAWN MALAGEN!
Imperial Palace, Dataran capital of Mortarr
I SUPPORTED YOU CENTURIES AGO MALAGEN, WE HAD THE EASTERN KINGDOMS BENEATH OUR HEEL...
THEY WERE ALL BUT DEFEATED/ BUT YOU CALLED FOR RETREAT/ MY CLAN SERVED AS THE REAR GUARD FOR THAT ACTION. MY KIN AND I SUFFERED MUCH FOR YOUR PETTY SUPERSTITIONS.
THE DARKLYTE ARMOR IS NO SUPERSTITION KORZETH. AND NEITHER IS THE PROPHECY.
THAT PROPHECY FORETELLS OF YOUR OWN DOOM MALAGEN. NOT MINE. YOU MAY HAVE DUPED YOUR SON THE PRINCE, AND EVEN VARDEMUS INTO THIS MADNESS...
BUT I FOR ONE WILL NOT SUPPORT YOU IN THIS FOOLS ERRAND.
NEED I REMIND YOU THAT MALAGEN IS OUR KAHN, HEARCH KORZETH. WE ARE BLOODSWORN TO HIM, AND HIM ALONE.
City of eternal night, or darkness


LEARN YOUR PLACE WOMAN. YOUR CLAN IS *WEAK* COMPARED TO MINE, THINK NOT THAT I FEAR THEE BECAUSE YOU SHARE MALAGEN'S BED, WITCH.
THEN YOU ARE A FOOL KORZETH.
BUT IF YOU LIKE, I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO...
...EDUCATE YOU.
ENOUGH OF THIS PETTY BICKERING. YOU'VE BOTH MADE YOUR OPINIONS *ABUNDANTLY* CLEAR.
VARDEMIS HAS ALREADY GIVEN ME HIS SUPPORT AND IS PROCEEDING WITH THE ATTACK ON SHAL'HAZAR AS WE SPEAK.
WHAT OF YOU TESSAN? WHERE DO YOUR LOYALTIES LIE?

AS NASIRA SAID MY KAHN, WE ARE SWORN TO YOU, IT IS NOT OURS TO QUESTION THE IMPERIAL WILL...
...IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE DARKLYTE ARMOR HOLDS THE KEY TO OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY, THEN I WILL SUPPORT YOU--FOR NOW.
VERY WELL. THEN, ALL OF YOU MAY GO. WE WILL MEET AGAIN AT DUSK TOMORROW. CONSIDER MY WORDS CAREFULLY. CAREFULLY INDEED, CONSIDER THEM AS THOUGH...
AS THOUGH YOUR LIVES DEPENDED ON IT...
DO YOU THINK KORZETH WILL SUPPORT YOU M'LORD?
PERHAPS. IT IS OF NO MOMENT. IF HE DOES NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, THEN I WILL CUT THE JEMMA BERRY HE CALLS A BRAIN OUT OF HIS SKULL AND CHANGE IT FOR HIM.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE DARKLYTE ARMOR WILL BE MINE.

BAH... THE HUMANS HAVE BECOME INDOLENT DURING THEIR RESPITE FROM US. THEY BARELY PUT UP A FIGHT.
WHETHER THEY DIE ON THEIR FEET OR THEIR KNEES MATTERS LITTLE. MY FATHER ORDERED US TO OBTAIN THE ILLIDRIUM.
THAT IS ALL WE NEED TO CONCERN OURSELVES WITH.
OF COURSE MY PRINCE.
YOU. BRING ME THAT BOOK.
UHHH...
YOU. BRING ME THAT BOOK.

A BIT MELODRAMATIC, BUT EFFECTIVE...

GODS... I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER GET OUT OF THERE...IT'S A GOOD THING YOUR NOSE ISN'T AS *POINTY* AS YOUR EARS ELVEN GIRL, THE SMELL IN THEIR WAS POSITIVELY HORRID..
MY NAME IS ELESSA OLD MAN. NOT DRYAD-KIN, *NOT* ELVEN GIRL, *NOT* ELF-EARS, JUST ELESSA.
VERY WELL THEN ...ELESSA... I'M DELEZAR, A MAGE OF NO SMALL SKILL, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, AND MY YOUNG FRIEND HERE IS ZEPH
WILL THE CHILD NEED ANY HELP NAVIGATING THE WOODS?
WHO ZEPH? OH, HE'S NOT BLIND MY DEAR, QUITE THE OPPOSITE ACTUALLY, HE'S A SEER. THE BLINDFOLD IS JUST THERE SO THAT HIS ABILITIES DON'T GET THE BETTER OF HIM. HE CAN SEE AS WELL AS YOU OR I. QUITE A BIT *BETTER* ACTUALLY.
GOOD. THE SUN IS COMING UP AND WE NEED TO GET UNDER SOME COVER.
I'LL GET JERELL
WE SHOULD GO JERELL.
I'LL BE *ALONG* IN A MINUTE.
YOU KNOW A *BLOOD OATH* ISN'T SOMETHING YOU SHOULD TAKE LIGHTLY.

WE ALL DIE HERE
I DON'T PLAN TO.
TO BE CONTINUED

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*Special thanks to Jeff Woo and Ramil Sunga*

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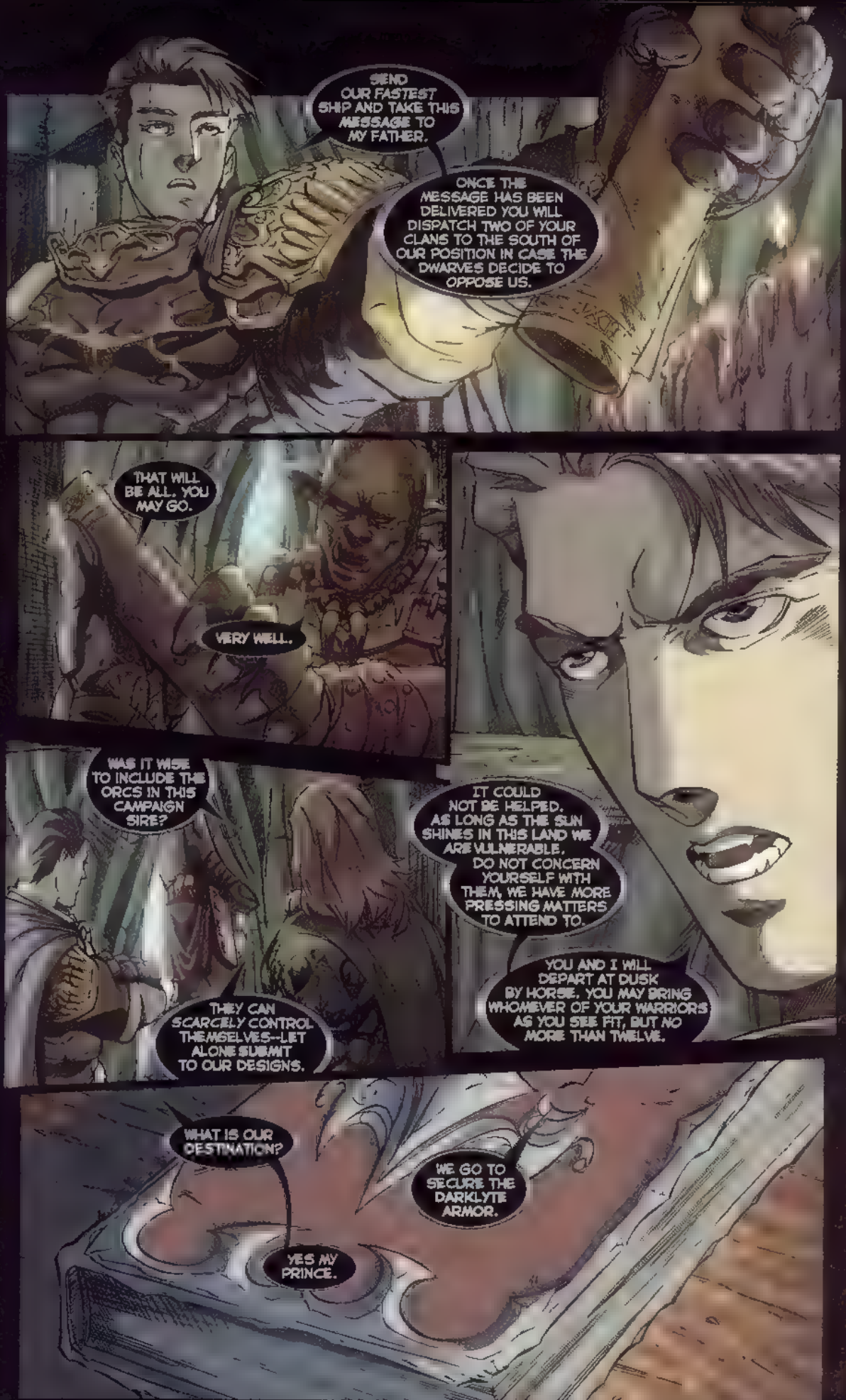
LET'S MOVE I'VE SEEN ENOUGH.
THE DATARANS HAVE BLOCKED OFF THE ENTIRE PENINSULA. WE'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY AROUND IF WE'RE GOING TO REJOIN ANY OF OUR FORCES. WE'LL SKIRT THE EDGE OF THE YATTANIAN FOREST AND COME AROUND THE TIP OF DRAGON'S PEACE
FROM THERE WE CAN TAKE THE SOUTHERN CARAVAN ROUTE STRAIGHT TO SONODARA.
PERHAPS WE CAN APPEAL TO THE ELVES FOR AID. IT'S CURIOUS THAT THEY HAVEN'T MADE AN APPEARANCE YET.
YOU'D THINK THE SUDDEN LANDING OF SEVERAL THOUSAND VAMPIRES WOULD AROUSE THEIR ATTENTION.
YOU'LL FIND NO AID FROM THE ELVES. THEY CONSIDER THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER RACES AS BENEATH THEIR ATTENTION. THE LIVES OF YOUR COMRADES ARE PROOF OF THAT.

THEN WHAT OF YOU ELF? WHERE DO YOUR LOYALTIES LIE IN THE FACE OF YOUR KIND'S INDIFFERENCE?
I LEFT THE WAYS OF MY PEOPLE BEHIND LONG AGO. LISTEN TO ME WHEN I SAY THIS...
THOUGH THE ELVES MAY NOT BE YOUR ENEMIES, THEY MAY NOT BE YOUR FRIENDS

WE HAVE THE HUMANS ON THE RUN MY PRINCE, WE SHOULD BE *PRESSING* OUR ADVANTAGE BEFORE ASTAROTH OR ONE OF THE OTHER DEMONS CAN RAISE AN ARMY FROM THE ABYSS TO OPPOSE US.
THE SUMMONING OF A DRAGON OF SHIM'TAR'S POWER HAS UNDOUBTEDLY *ALREADY AROUSED* THEIR ATTENTION.
PATIENCE VARDEMIS. THE WAR AGAINST THE HUMANS IS *INCONSEQUENTIAL* WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST OUR ULTIMATE GOAL.
IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY, MY PRINCE. BUT MOVE QUICKLY.
YOU CALLED FOR ME.
OUR ARMY IS VAST, AND WE LEFT FEW SURVIVORS. IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE WE NEED MORE FOOD.
AH, MORDAG, I HAVE A *TASK* FOR YOU.

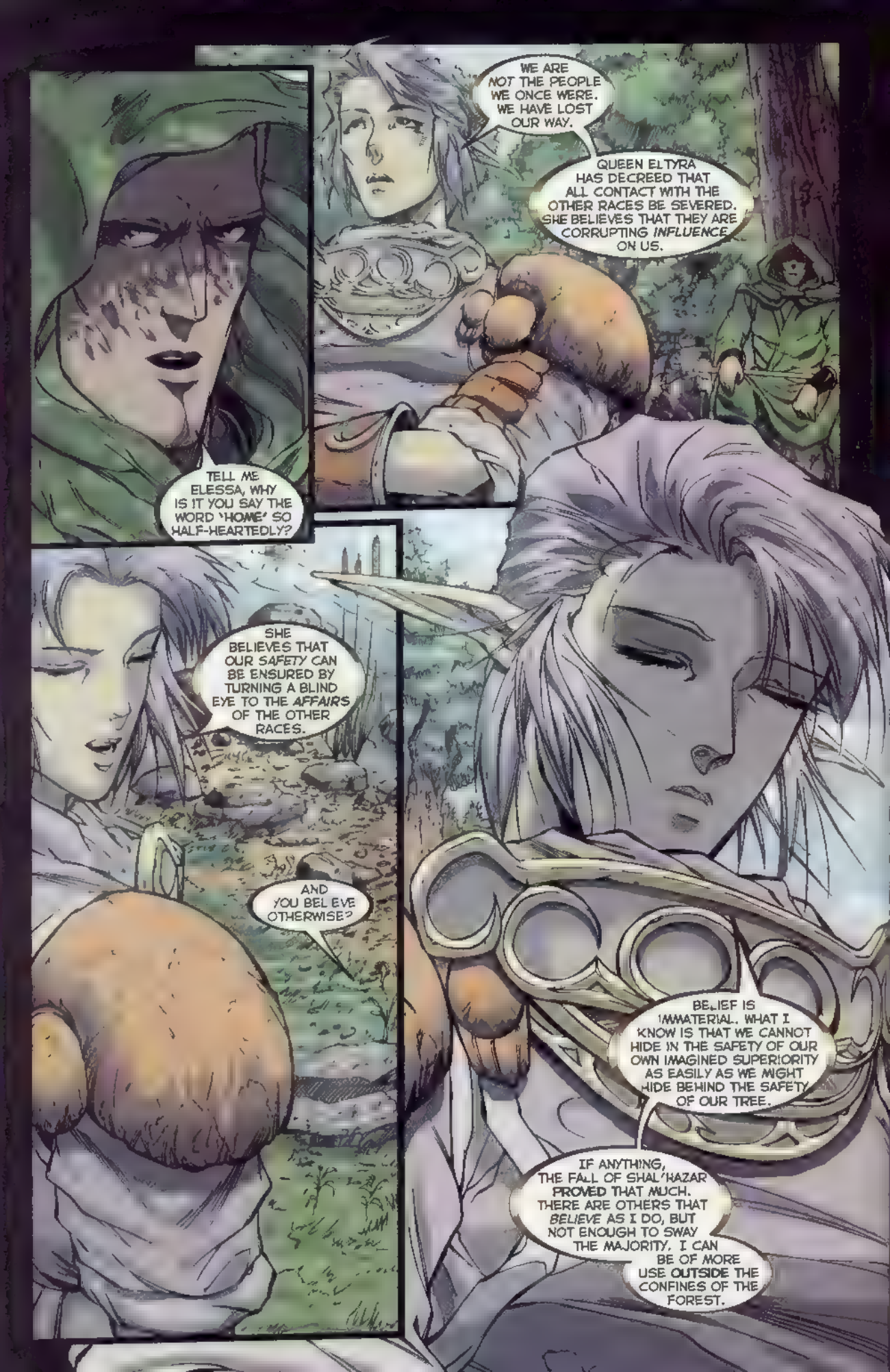

SEND OUR FASTEST SHIP AND TAKE THIS MESSAGE TO MY FATHER.
ONCE THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED YOU WILL DISPATCH TWO OF YOUR CLANS TO THE SOUTH OF OUR POSITION IN CASE THE DWARVES DECIDE TO OPPOSE US.
THAT WILL BE ALL, YOU MAY GO.
VERY WELL.
WAS IT WISE TO INCLUDE THE ORCS IN THIS CAMPAIGN SIRE?
THEY CAN SCARCELY CONTROL THEMSELVES--LET ALONE SUBMIT TO OUR DESIGNS.
IT COULD NOT BE HELPED. AS LONG AS THE SUN SHINES IN THIS LAND WE ARE VULNERABLE. DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THEM, WE HAVE MORE PRESSING MATTERS TO ATTEND TO.
YOU AND I WILL DEPART AT DUSK BY HORSE. YOU MAY BRING WHOMEVER OF YOUR WARRIORS AS YOU SEE FIT, BUT NO MORE THAN TWELVE.
WHAT IS OUR DESTINATION?
WE GO TO SECURE THE DARKLYTE ARMOR.
YES MY PRINCE.

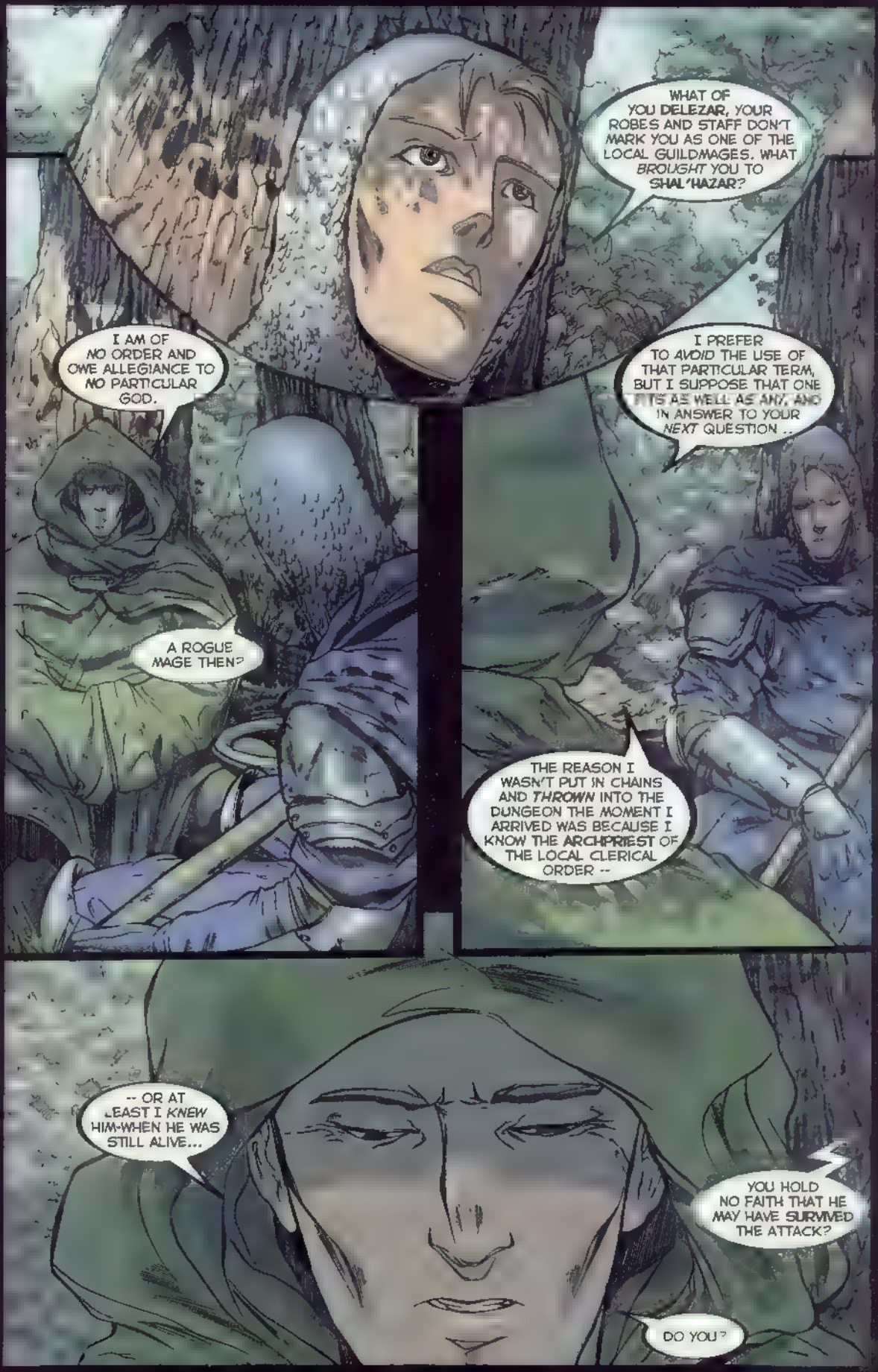
I BRING NEWS FROM SHAL'HAZAR SIRE.
OUT WITH IT GENERAL ALDUS, WE DON'T STAND ON CEREMONY HERE.
SHAL'HAZAR HAS FALLEN TO THE DATARANS SIRE.
WHAT??? BUT HOW?
I DON'T KNOW SIRE. WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO LOCATE ANY SURVIVORS.
THEIR FORCES HAVE ENCIRCLED THE ENTIRE PLATEAU.

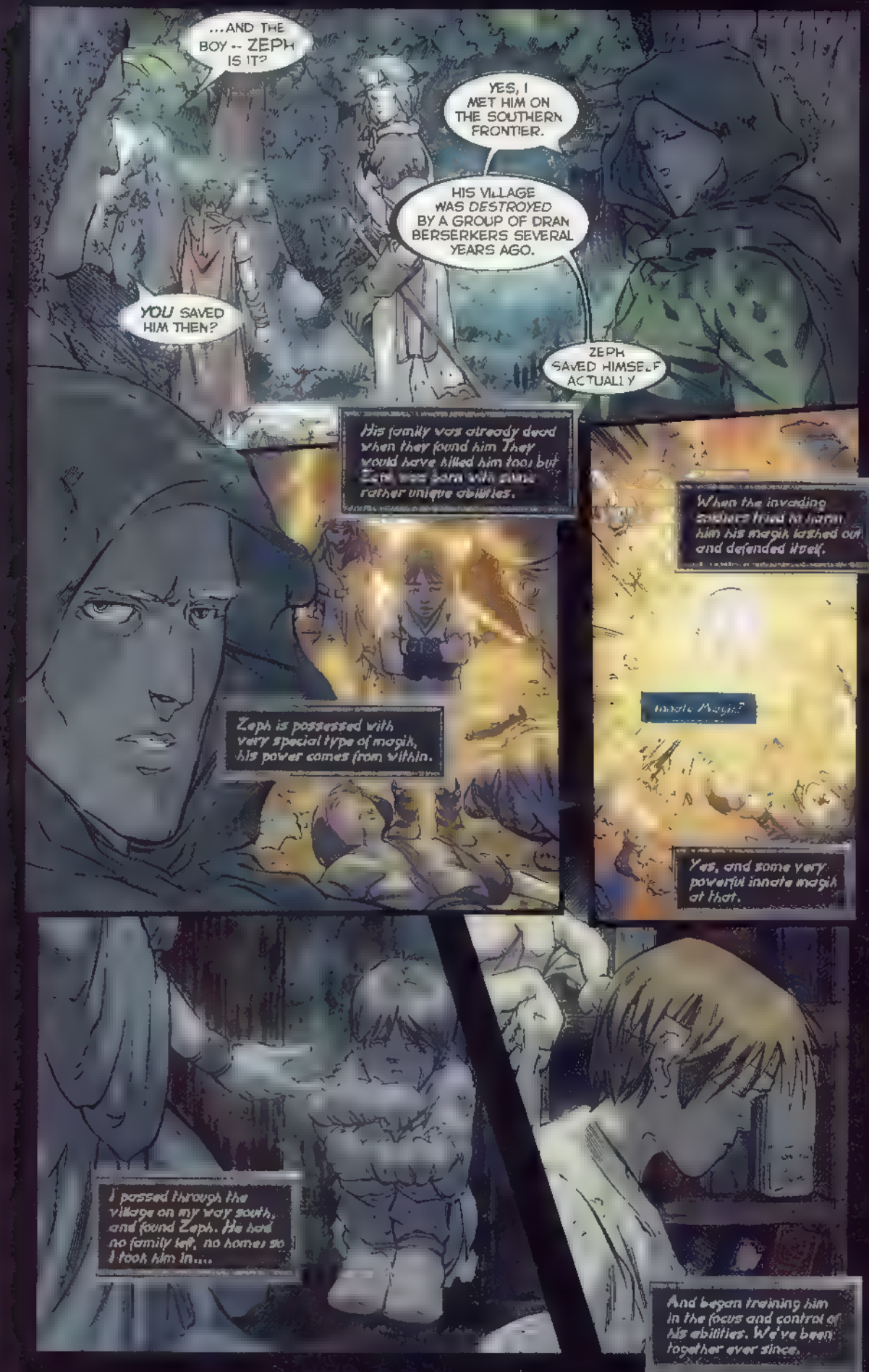
HOW MANY?
AT LEAST 12 BATALLIONS OF DATARANS OCCUPY THE PLAINS WITH AN *UNKNOWN* NUMBER STILL STAGED ON THEIR INVASION CRAFT AND ANOTHER 4 CLANS OF ORCS ACTING AS A *DAYLIGHT* GUARD.
OUR BEST ESTIMATE PUTS THEIR NUMBERS AT WELL *OVER* TWENTY THOUSAND.
HOW FAR HAVE THEY PENETRATED?
AS OF YET THEY HAVE *NOT* MOVED PAST THE SHAL PENINSULA. THEY STILL NEED TO UNLOAD SUPPLIES AND *FORTIFY* THEIR POSITIONS.
HOW *SOON* CAN WE ASSEMBLE OUR FORCES?
IT IS A 10 DAY *FORCED* MARCH FROM HERE TO SHAL'HAZAR. IF WE DISPATCH RIDERS IMMEDIATELY I CAN HAVE THE BULK OF OUR FORCES IN POSITION *WITHIN* TWO WEEKS.
TWO WEEKS

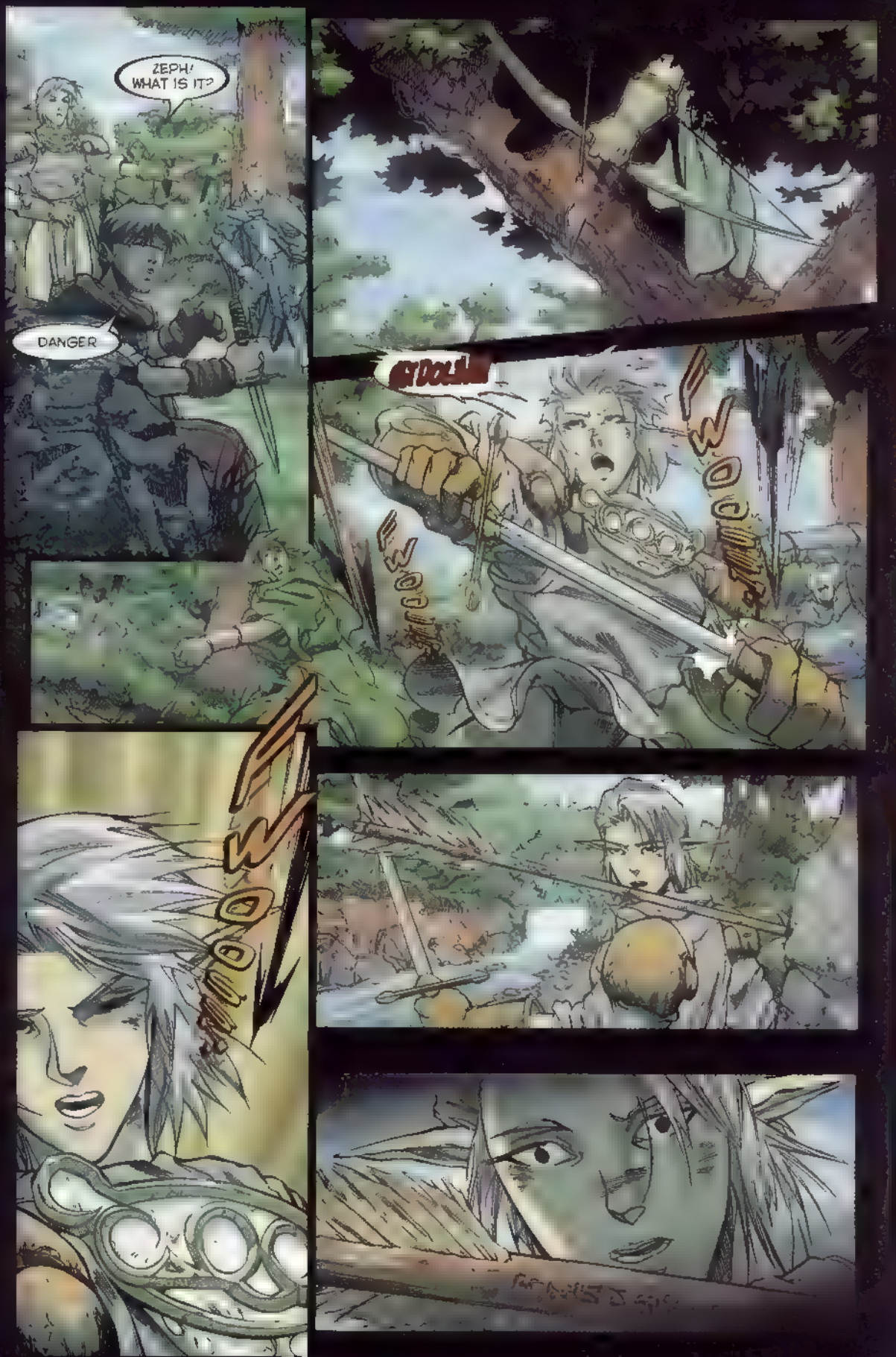
I BELIEVE WE CAN HALT THEIR ADVANCE ONCE WE ARE FULLY ENGAGED. BUT NOT FOR LONG. WE WILL NEED HELP IF WE ARE TO TURN BACK THIS INVASION.
THESE ARE DARK TIMES MY FRIEND. SEND OUT AS MANY OF OUR LIGHT CAVALRY REGIMENTS AS YOU CAN SPARE AND EVACUATE THE VILLAGES CLOSEST TO THE ENEMY.
IF WE HAD HAD MORE TIME... SOME WARNING PERHAPS...
THERE'S NO SENSE IN WASTING OUR TIME WITH THAT GENERAL.
HISTORY CAN BERATE US FOR OUR FAILURES, BUT WE LIVE IN THE PRESENT. WE HAVE BIGGER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN THAT WHICH HAS ALREADY PASSED.
IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY MY KING.
SEND MESSENGERS TO THE OTHER RACES, THEY WILL WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING. WITH LUCK, SOME MAY STAND WITH US IN TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
I ONLY HOPE WE ARE NOT TOO LATE.

DO YOU THINK WE COULD STOP FOR A MOMENT, WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR HOURS.
...SPELL CASTING AND READING DUSTY OLD BOOKS ALL DAY DOESN'T EXACTLY DO WONDERS FOR ONE'S PHYSIQUE...
YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THESE WOODS ELESSA, IS THERE A SUITABLE PLACE TO STOP NEARBY?
THERE'S A BROOK RUNNING THROUGH THE FOREST JUST OVER THE NEXT HILL, WE CAN STOP THERE.
IT HAS BEEN MANY YEARS SINCE I'VE BEEN ... HOME


WE ARE NOT THE PEOPLE WE ONCE WERE. WE HAVE LOST OUR WAY.
QUEEN ELTYRA HAS DECREED THAT ALL CONTACT WITH THE OTHER RACES BE SEVERED. SHE BELIEVES THAT THEY ARE CORRUPTING *INFLUENCE* ON US.
TELL ME ELESSA, WHY IS IT YOU SAY THE WORD 'HOME' SO HALF-HEARTEDLY?
SHE BELIEVES THAT OUR *SAFETY* CAN BE ENSURED BY TURNING A BLIND EYE TO THE *AFFAIRS* OF THE OTHER RACES.
AND YOU BELIEVE OTHERWISE?
BELIEF IS IMMATERIAL. WHAT I KNOW IS THAT WE CANNOT HIDE IN THE SAFETY OF OUR OWN IMAGINED SUPERIORITY AS EASILY AS WE MIGHT HIDE BEHIND THE SAFETY OF OUR TREE.
IF ANYTHING, THE FALL OF SHAL'HAZAR PROVED THAT MUCH. THERE ARE OTHERS THAT *BELIEVE* AS I DO, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO SWAY THE MAJORITY. I CAN BE OF MORE USE **OUTSIDE** THE CONFINES OF THE FOREST.


WHAT OF YOU DELEZAR, YOUR ROBES AND STAFF DON'T MARK YOU AS ONE OF THE LOCAL GUILDMAGES. WHAT *BROUGHT* YOU TO SHAL'HAZAR?
I AM OF NO ORDER AND OWE ALLEGIANCE TO NO PARTICULAR GOD.
I PREFER TO *AVOID* THE USE OF THAT PARTICULAR TERM, BUT I SUPPOSE THAT ONE FITS AS WELL AS ANY, AND IN ANSWER TO YOUR *NEXT* QUESTION ..
A ROGUE MAGE THEN?
THE REASON I WASN'T PUT IN CHAINS AND *THROWN* INTO THE DUNGEON THE MOMENT I ARRIVED WAS BECAUSE I KNOW THE ARCHPRIEST OF THE LOCAL CLERICAL ORDER --
-- OR AT LEAST I *KNEW* HIM-WHEN HE WAS STILL ALIVE...
YOU HOLD NO FAITH THAT HE MAY HAVE SURVIVED THE ATTACK?
DO YOU?

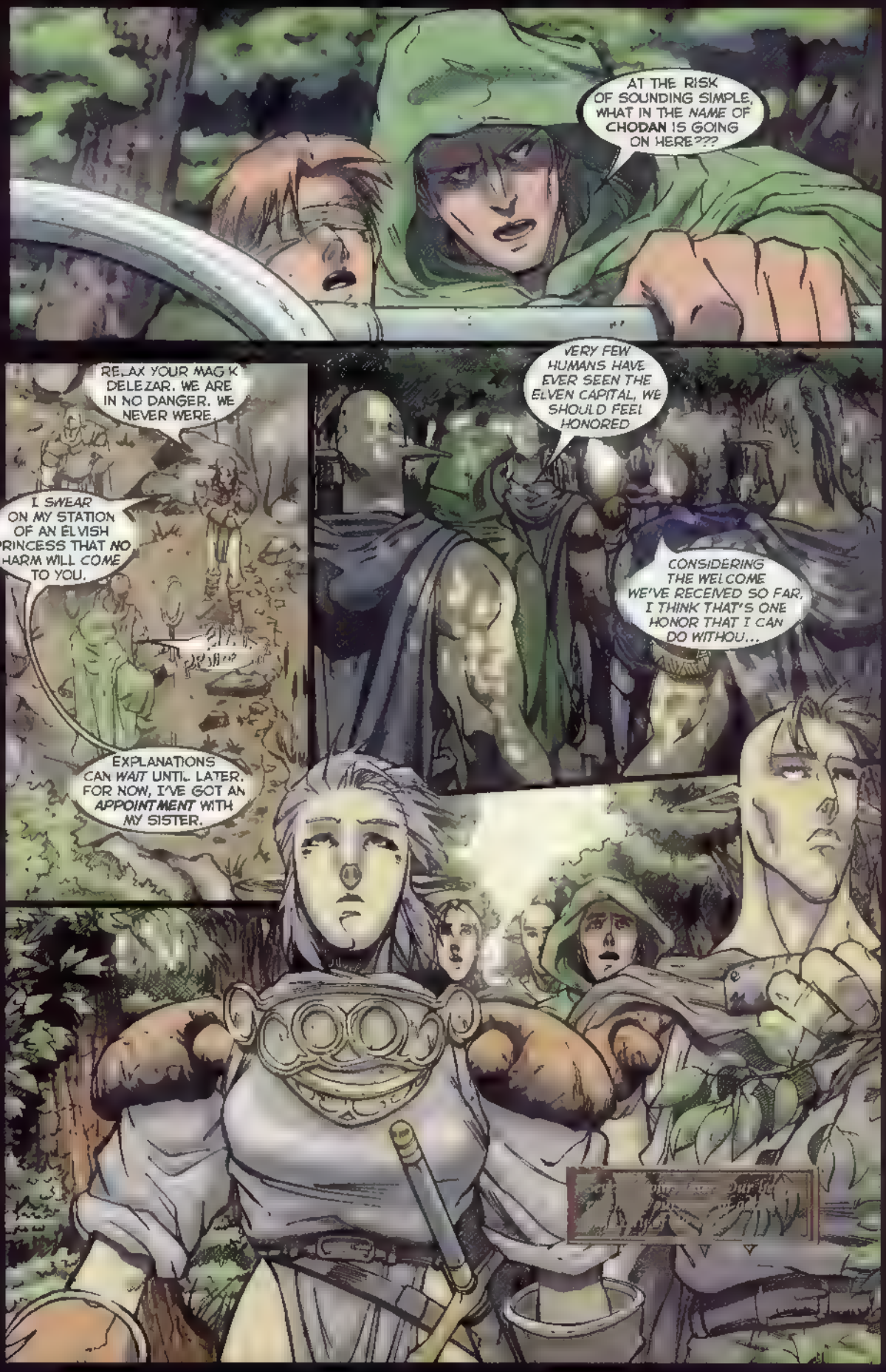

...AND THE BOY -- ZEPH IS IT?
YES, I MET HIM ON THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER.
HIS VILLAGE WAS DESTROYED BY A GROUP OF DRAN BERSERKERS SEVERAL YEARS AGO.
YOU SAVED HIM THEN?
ZEPH SAVED HIMSELF ACTUALLY
His family was already dead when they found him. They would have killed him too, but Zeph was born with some rather unique abilities.
When the invading soldiers tried to harm him his magik lashed out and defended itself.
Innate Magik?
Zeph is possessed with very special type of magik, his power comes from within.
Yes, and some very powerful innate magik at that.
I passed through the village on my way south, and found Zeph. He had no family left, no homes so I took him in....
And began training him in the focus and control of his abilities. We've been together ever since.


ZEPH! WHAT IS IT?
DANGER
WOOSH
WOOSH
WOOSH
WOOSH

FWASSH!!!
PZAM!
DEPH!!

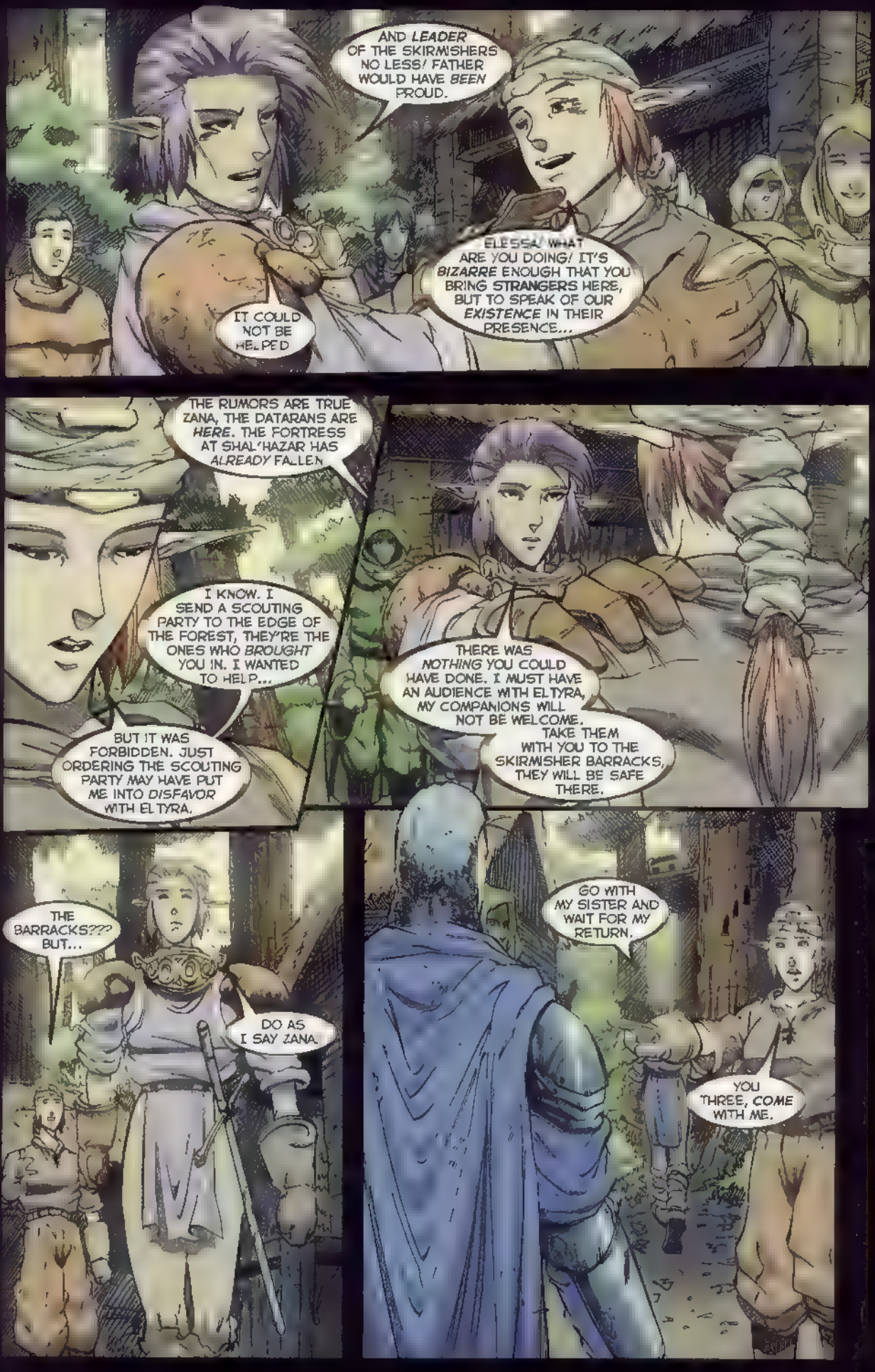
OOF!
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT HUMAN
DAMN
IF ANY HARM COMES TO THE BOY...SO HELP ME I'LL..
ENOUGH! WHAT TREASON IS THIS???
WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

HELLO ELESSA, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME
KELVAR... WHAT IN THE NAME OF TANIA ARE YOU DOING FIRING UPON US?
A BETTER QUESTION WOULD BE WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED TO THE FOREST?
YOUR FALL FROM GRACE AND EMBRACE OF THE HUMANS HAS PROVED WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE.
HE CAN DECIDE WHETHER THIS SITUATION IS A RESULT OF YOUR INEPTITUDE OR TREASON.
MY LOYALTIES ARE NONE OF YOUR CONCERN. YOU WILL TAKE MY COMPANIONS AND I IMMEDIATELY TO THE CITADEL AT SUCH TIME...I WILL SPEAK TO YOUR COMMANDER ABOUT YOUR APPARENT LACK OF GOOD JUDGEMENT.


AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING SIMPLE, WHAT IN THE NAME OF CHODAN IS GOING ON HERE???
VERY FEW HUMANS HAVE EVER SEEN THE ELVEN CAPITAL, WE SHOULD FEEL HONORED
CONSIDERING THE WELCOME WE'VE RECEIVED SO FAR, I THINK THAT'S ONE HONOR THAT I CAN DO WITHOU...
RELAX YOUR MAGIK DELEZAR. WE ARE IN NO DANGER. WE NEVER WERE.
I SWEAR ON MY STATION OF AN ELVISH PRINCESS THAT NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU.
EXPLANATIONS CAN WAIT UNTIL LATER. FOR NOW, I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH MY SISTER.

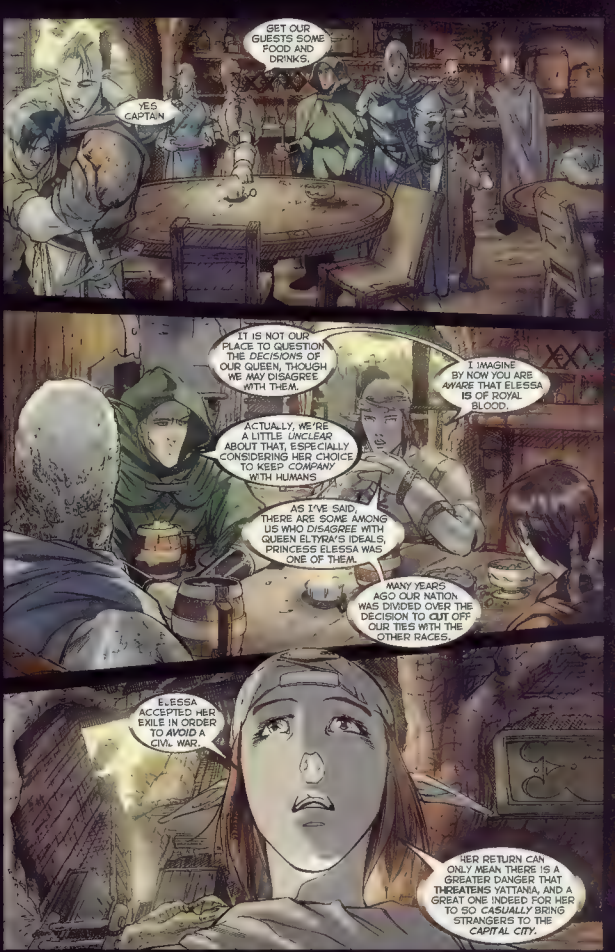
..WOW...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS? WHO ARE THESE STRANGERS?
Elessa!
HELLO, sister. HOW IS MY FAVORITE LITTLE SISTER?
NOT SO LITTLE ANYMORE... YOU'VE BEEN AWAY MUCH TOO LONG.


AND LEADER OF THE SKIRMISHERS NO LESS! FATHER WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD.
ELESSA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING! IT'S BIZARRE ENOUGH THAT YOU BRING STRANGERS HERE, BUT TO SPEAK OF OUR EXISTENCE IN THEIR PRESENCE...
IT COULD NOT BE HELPED
THE RUMORS ARE TRUE ZANA, THE DATARANS ARE HERE. THE FORTRESS AT SHAL'HAZAR HAS ALREADY FALLEN
I KNOW. I SEND A SCOUTING PARTY TO THE EDGE OF THE FOREST, THEY'RE THE ONES WHO BROUGHT YOU IN. I WANTED TO HELP...
BUT IT WAS FORBIDDEN. JUST ORDERING THE SCOUTING PARTY MAY HAVE PUT ME INTO DISFAVOR WITH ELTYRA.
THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE. I MUST HAVE AN AUDIENCE WITH ELTYRA, MY COMPANIONS WILL NOT BE WELCOME. TAKE THEM WITH YOU TO THE SKIRMISHER BARRACKS, THEY WILL BE SAFE THERE.
THE BARRACKS??? BUT...
DO AS I SAY ZANA.
GO WITH MY SISTER AND WAIT FOR MY RETURN.
YOU THREE, COME WITH ME.

CAN I HELP YOU KELVAR?
I'M GOING TO TELL QUEEN ELTYRA WHAT YOU'VE DONE ELESSA! HOW YOU VIOLATED YOUR EXILE, AND HOW YOU BROUGHT STRANGERS INTO OUR INNER SANCTUM!
MARISANA MAY HAVE LEADERSHIP OF THE SKIRMISHERS, BUT I STILL HAVE MY DUTY TO YATTANNIA.
YOUR PATRIOTISM IS ADMIRABLE. BUT TO BORROW AN EXPRESSION I LEARNED FROM MY TIME WITHIN THE BORDERS OF MYRIDORN: THANKS, BUT
NO THANKS
SO THIS IS THE LEGENDARY SKIRMISHER HALL.

YOU'VE HEARD OF US THEN?
THERE ARE A FEW BRIEF NOTES ABOUT YOU IN THE LIBRARY AT THE MYRISH WAR COLLEGE MOSTLY RUMORS AND UNCONFIRMED REPORTS.
AND WHAT DO THOSE *REPORTS* TELL YOU?
ONLY THAT THE SKIRMISHERS *APPEAR* TO BE AN ELITE ELEMENT OF THE YATTANIAN ARMY
. CONSTITUTING THE CLOSEST THING THE ELVISH ARMY HAS TO ANY TYPE OF ORGANIZED INFANTRY
NOT QUITE ACCURATE, BUT *ESSENTIALLY* CORRECT THE SKIRMISHERS ARE NOT AN ELITE ELEMENT OF OUR ARMY, WE *ARE* THE ELITE ELEMENT OF OUR ARMY.
WE ARE THE *FIRST* ONES TO ENTER A BATTLE, AND THE LAST ONES TO LEAVE
OUR ROOTS STRETCH FROM THE OPENING MONTHS OF THE FIRST WAR OF THE RACES...THOUGH AS OF LATE WITH THE QUEEN'S *INCREASINGLY* XENOPHOBIC TENDENCIES, OUR TALENTS HAVE *FALLEN* INTO DISUSE
I TAKE IT FROM YOUR *TONE* THAT YOU DISAPPROVE?


GET OUR GUESTS SOME FOOD AND DRINKS.
YES, CAPTAIN.
IT IS NOT OUR PLACE TO QUESTION THE *DECISIONS* OF OUR QUEEN, THOUGH WE MAY DISAGREE WITH THEM.
I IMAGINE BY NOW YOU ARE *AWARE* THAT ELESSA **IS** OF ROYAL BLOOD.
ACTUALLY, WE'RE A LITTLE *UNCLEAR* ABOUT THAT, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING HER CHOICE TO KEEP *COMPANY* WITH HUMANS.
AS I'VE SAID, THERE ARE SOME AMONG US WHO *DISAGREE* WITH QUEEN ELTYRA'S IDEALS, PRINCESS ELESSA WAS ONE OF THEM.
MANY YEARS AGO OUR NATION WAS DIVIDED OVER THE DECISION TO **CUT** OFF OUR TIES WITH THE OTHER RACES.
ELESSA ACCEPTED HER EXILE IN ORDER TO *AVOID* A CIVIL WAR.
HER RETURN CAN ONLY MEAN THERE IS A GREATER DANGER THAT **THREATENS** YATTANIA, AND A GREAT ONE INDEED FOR HER TO SO *CASUALLY* BRING STRANGERS TO THE *CAPITAL CITY*.

I only hope that she can sway the Queen to her cause. Become without a unified force to oppose the Dolerous, we are all doomed...
HMPH
SO THE RUMORS WERE TRUE, YOU HAVE RETURNED. HELLO SISTER. I TRUST ALL IS WELL WITH YOU?
SILENCE! YOU ARE THE ONE THAT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ELESSA.
YOU HAVE RETURNED, VIOLATING ELVISH LAW BY IGNORING YOUR EXILE
AND THE PUNISHMENT, MY DEAR SISTER. .
WE HAVEN'T TIME FOR YOUR GAMES ELTYRA. WE BOTH KNOW WHY I'M HERE, AND HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT
BUT THIS IS LARGER THAN US BOTH. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE DANGER WITH WHICH WE ARE NOW FACED.

IS DEATH!!!!
GUARDS
KILL HER!
TO BE CONTINUED

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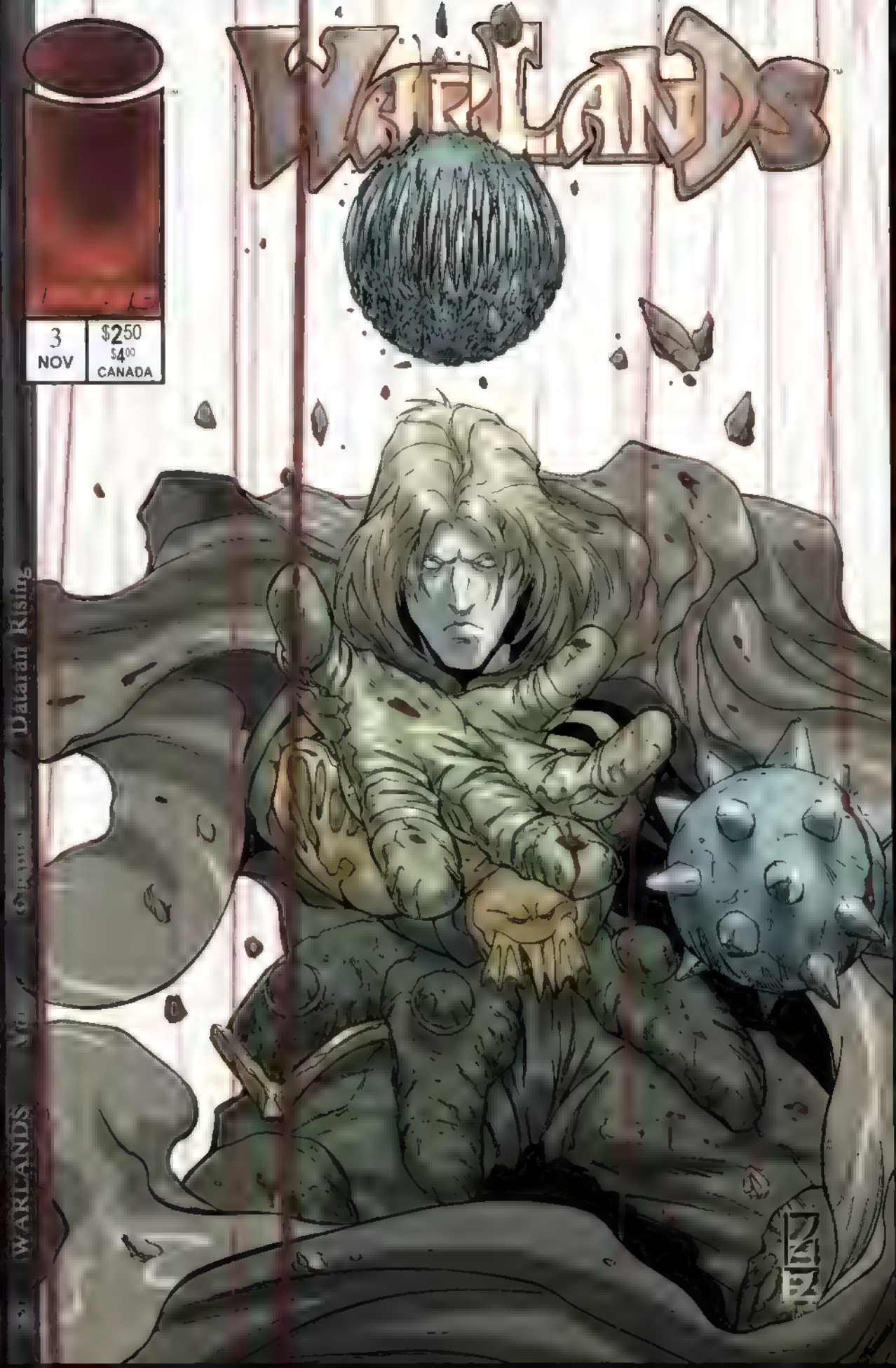
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Dataran Rising
WARLANDS

# WARLANDS™

CREATED BY
PAT LEE AND ADRIAN TSANG

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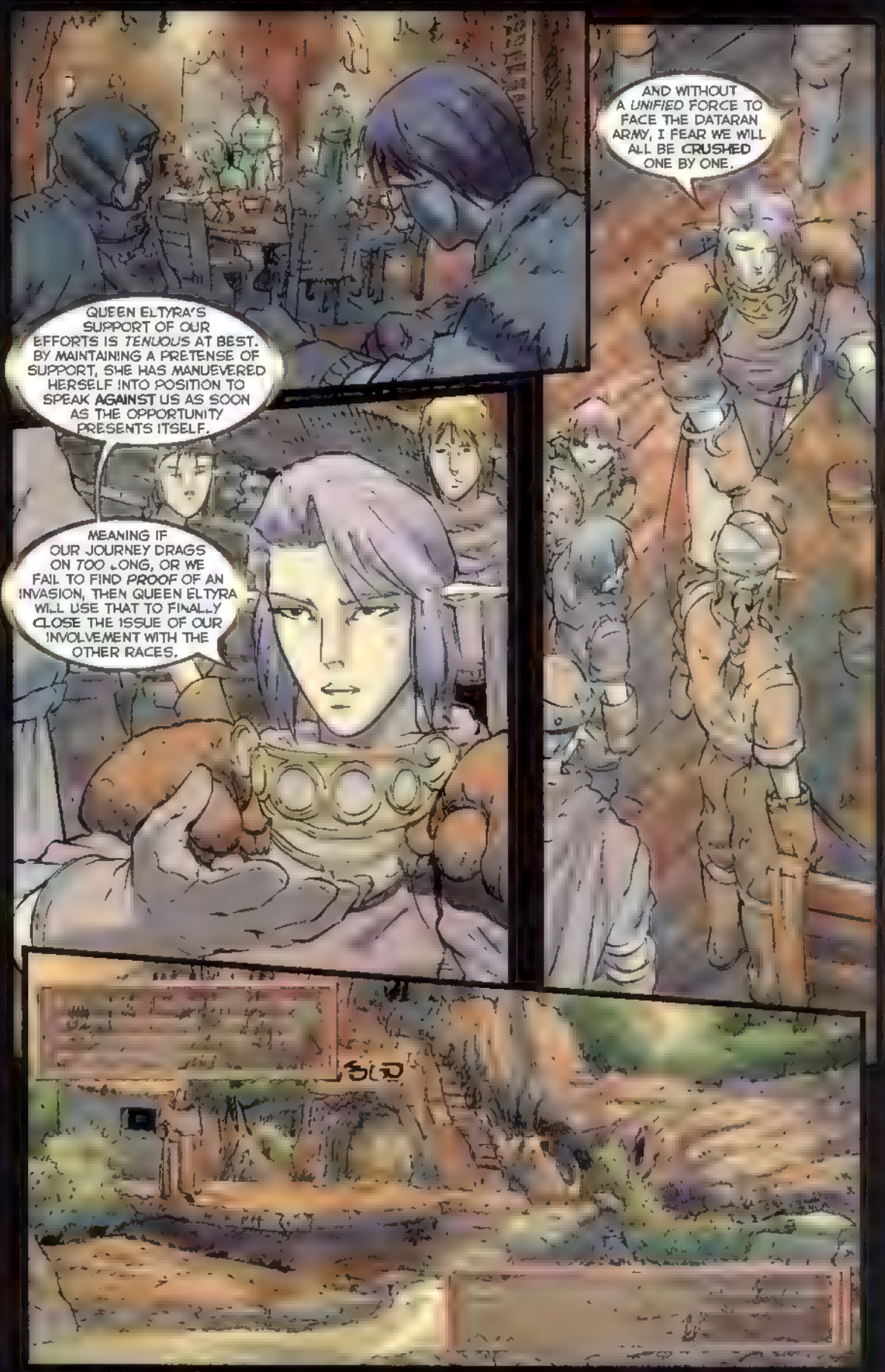
I GAVE YOU A DIRECT ORDER! KILL HER!
IMMEDIATELY!
IT SEEMS YOUR HOLD OVER OUR PEOPLE IS NOT AS COMPLETE AS YOU THOUGHT ELTYRA. EXILE OR NOT, YOUR GUARDS SEEM RELUCTANT TO FIRE
OR MAYBE THEY FEAR YOU WILL PUT THEM TO DEATH FOR KILLING AN ELF OF ROYAL BLOOD ON YOUR OWN ORDERS!
ENOUGH OF THIS! I WILL PASS SENTENCE ON YOU MYSELF!

YOUR TIME WITH THE *HUMANS* HAS MADE YOU **WEAK** SISTER. FOUR YEARS AGO YOU WOULD HAVE NEVER MADE THAT MISTAKE. I'M GOING TO *ENJOY* THIS...
DON'T BE
SO
WHAP!

CARE TO TRY THAT *MANEUVER* AGAIN? I CAN SET YOUR NOSE BACK INTO PLACE FOR YOU IF YOU LIKE.
CHANCELLOR KHARDEV?
I'M STILL QUEEN OF THIS NATION KHARDEV, *DON'T* ASSUME...
ENOUGH!!!
LOOK AT THE TWO OF YOU! FIGHTING LIKE ANIMALS! YOUR FATHER WOULD BE *ASHAMED* OF YOU! PUT AWAY YOUR SWORDS BEFORE I ORDER THE GUARDS TO SHOOT YOU BOTH!
*Enough!* FROM BOTH OF YOU! WE'RE AT THE *EXACT* SAME PLACE WE WERE FOUR YEARS AGO.
NOW BOTH OF YOU WILL PUT AWAY YOUR SWORDS IMMEDIATELY!
I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF *CONVENING* THE COUNCIL. ELTYRA WILL SPEAK HER GRIEVANCES, AND ELESSA MAY MAKE HER CASE AND THAT WILL BE THE *END* OF IT...

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS SHE? SHE'S BEEN GONE FOR ALMOST FIVE HOURS!
PATIENCE JERELL. FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME SO FAR, I GATHER THAT AS WE SPEAK...
MY SISTER IS TRYING TO CONVINCE A NATION TO GO TO WAR. IT IS A DECISION NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.
HMPH. IF YOU PEOPLE DID AS MUCH FIGHTING AS YOU DO TALKING, THIS WAR WOULD BE OVER BY NOW.
YOU MAY JUST GET YOUR WISH JERELL.
THINGS WENT WELL THEN?
THE COUNCIL HAS DECIDED TO ALLOW ME TO PROVE THE THREAT TO YATTANNIA.
THE SKIRMISHERS AND A SMALL CONTINGENT OF SHIPS WILL BE PLACED AT MY DISPOSAL, I AM TO USE THEM TO FIND DEFINITIVE PROOF OF A THREAT TO YATTANNIA.
THAT'S GREAT NEWS!
DON'T START CELEBRATING JUST YET LITTLE SISTER. THINGS AREN'T GOING AS WELL AS THEY SEEM TO BE.


QUEEN ELTYRA'S SUPPORT OF OUR EFFORTS IS *TENUOUS* AT BEST. BY MAINTAINING A PRETENSE OF SUPPORT, SHE HAS MANUEVERED HERSELF INTO POSITION TO SPEAK **AGAINST** US AS SOON AS THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF.
MEANING IF OUR JOURNEY DRAGS ON *TOO* LONG, OR WE FAIL TO FIND *PROOF* OF AN INVASION, THEN QUEEN ELTYRA WILL USE THAT TO FINALLY CLOSE THE ISSUE OF OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE OTHER RACES.
AND WITHOUT A *UNIFIED* FORCE TO FACE THE DATARAN ARMY, I FEAR WE WILL ALL BE **CRUSHED** ONE BY ONE.

HOW MANY ARE THERE CORPORA.?
14 MEN ON HORSE CAPTAIN. TRAVELING *WITHOUT* TORCHLIGHT MOVING WESTWARD ACROSS THE PLAINS.
THEY APPEAR TO BE **ARMED** AND *AVOIDING* THE MAIN ROADS SIRE. THEIR GROUP SHOULD BE JUST OVER THE NEXT RIDGE.
ALRIGHT MEN; STAY ALERT, AND KEEP YOUR **WEAPONS** READY. MOVE IN LOW AROUND THE RIDGE. WHEN THEY REACH THE LOWEST POINT OF THE HILLS MOVE IN AND *SURROUND* THEM.
**THERE** THEY ARE.
*HALT!* IN THE NAME OF THE MYRISH ARMY I **ORDER** YOU TO DISMOUNT, AND *IDENTIFY* YOURSELVES!

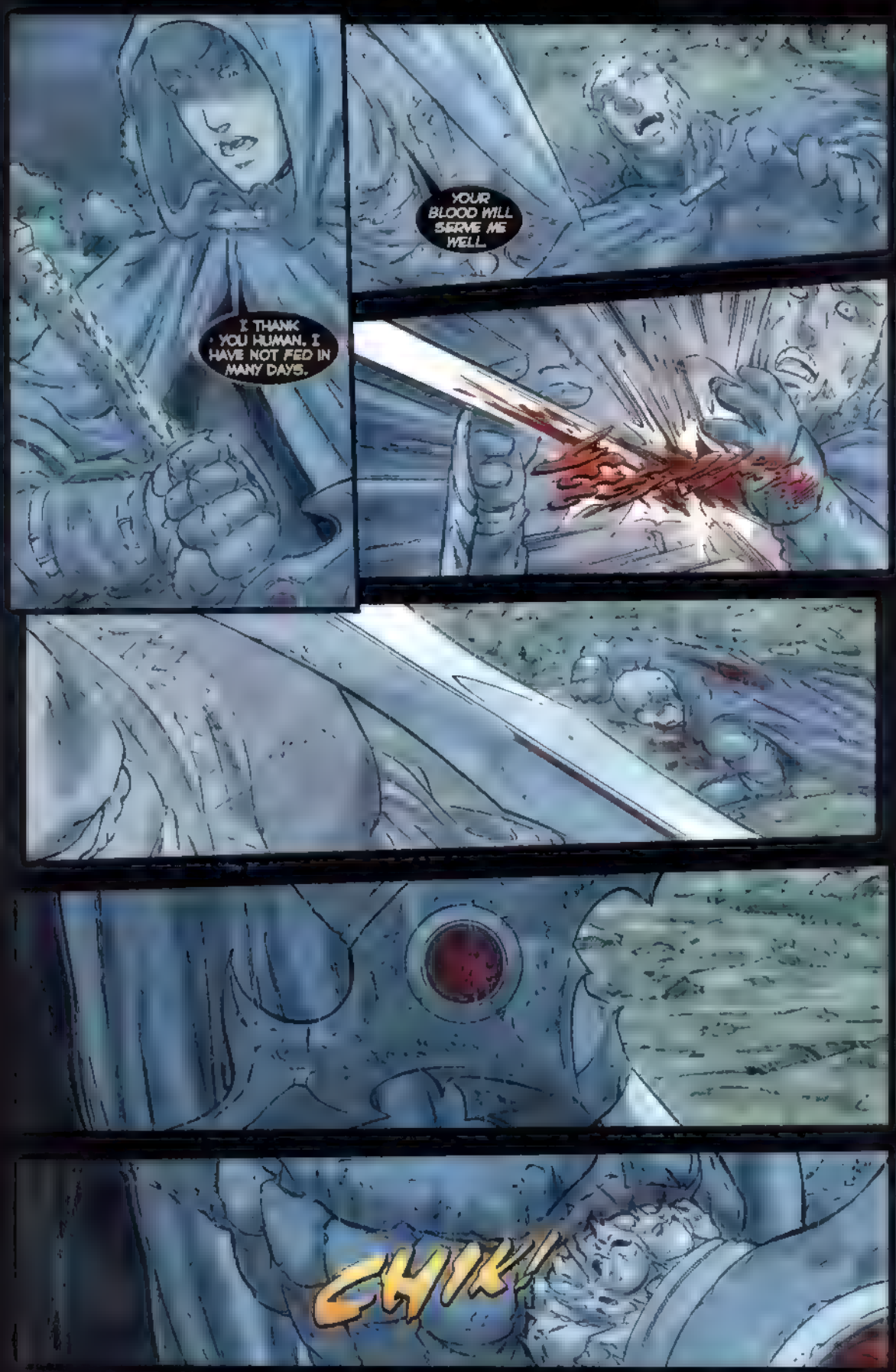
I SAY AGAIN. MY MEN HAVE YOU SURROUNDED. DISMOUNT, AND IDENTIFY YOURSELVES OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO FIRE.
THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING!
MAIM THE LEAD RIDER'S HORSE WITH YOUR BOW CORPORAL.
YES SIR.
PTANG!
FWOOOP!

THAT WAS A NICE MOVE THERE FRIEND.
BUT I'M STILL GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS TO IDENTIFY YOURSELVES. THE NEXT SHOT WILL BE FOR YOU
DO AS HE SAYS.

YOU THERE, IN THE MIDDLE, I'D ASK YOU TO COME OFF YOUR HORSE AS WELL.
CHUNK.
CHUNK.
CHUNK.

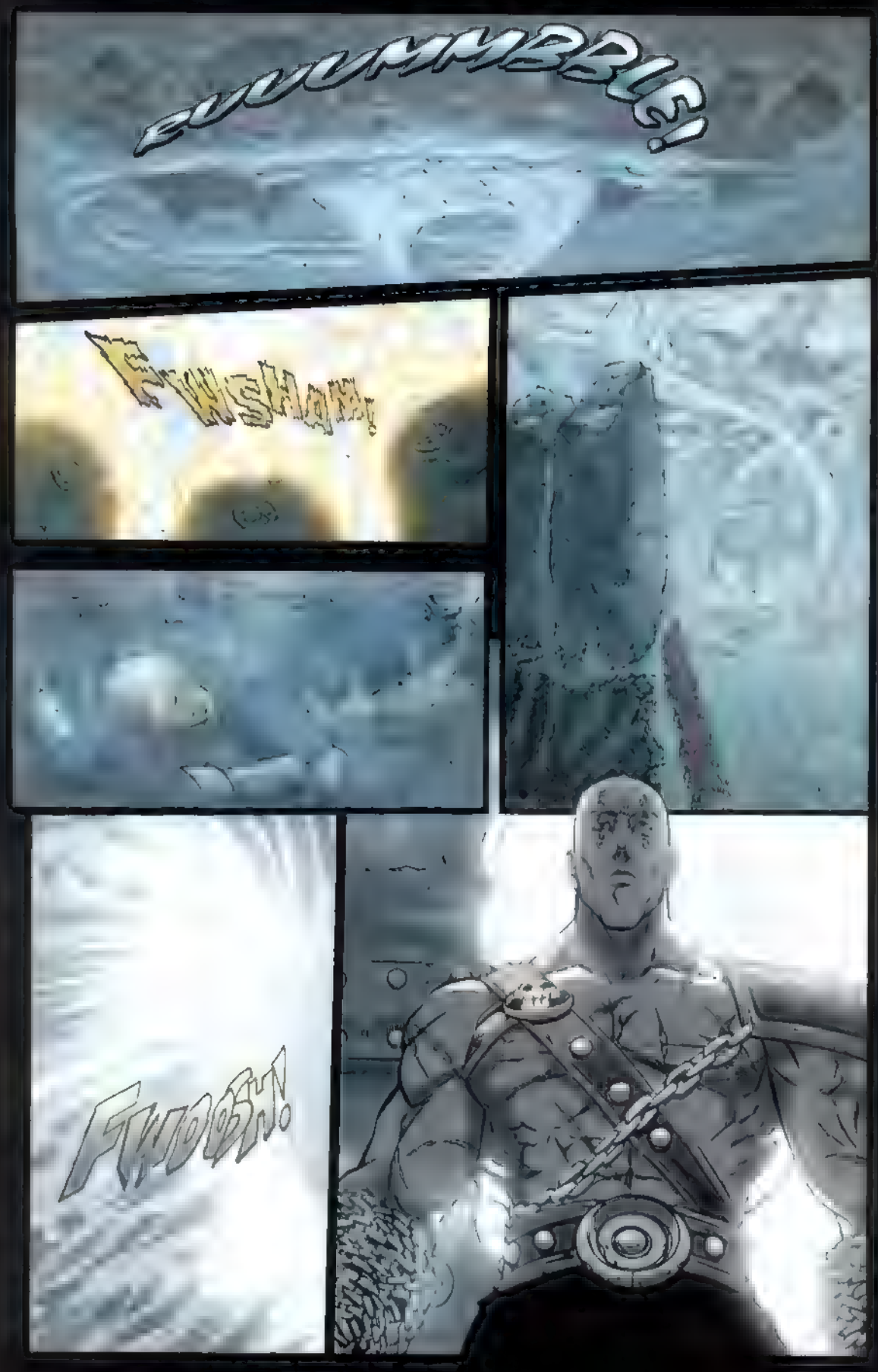
SHING
YEEGAARRGGH!!!
WHAT THE....

AARRGGGH!!!
SKLUTCH!


I THANK YOU HUMAN. I HAVE NOT FED IN MANY DAYS.
YOUR BLOOD WILL SERVE ME WELL.
CHIK!

SKLUR
IT IS FORTUNATE THAT WE ENCOUNTERED THEM. I FEARED WE WOULD HAVE TO DIVERT FROM OUR PLANNED ROUTE TO FEED.
TELL YOUR MEN THEY MAY TAKE THEIR FILL OF BLOOD TONIGHT. TURN THE REST, THEY WILL MAKE EXCELLENT SOLDIERS.
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER MY PRINCE?
MAY YOU MAKE A MORE SUCCESSFUL ZOMBIE THAN YOU DID A SOLDIER HUMAN.
WE MUST MOVE QUICKLY. WHEN MY FATHER REACHES THE MOUNTAIN I WILL PRESENT HIM WITH THE DARKLYTE ARMOR!
I CAN SENSE MY FATHER'S POWER VARDEMIS! HE WILL BE AMONG US SOON...
****

WE WILL FIGHT YOU TO THE LAST. YOU MAY KILL MANY, YOU MAY BRING YOUR ENTIRE HOST AGAINST US, BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE. WE WILL DEFEAT YOU.
SKUUK


RUUMMBLE!
FWSHH!
FWOOSH!

*Translated from ancient Orcish

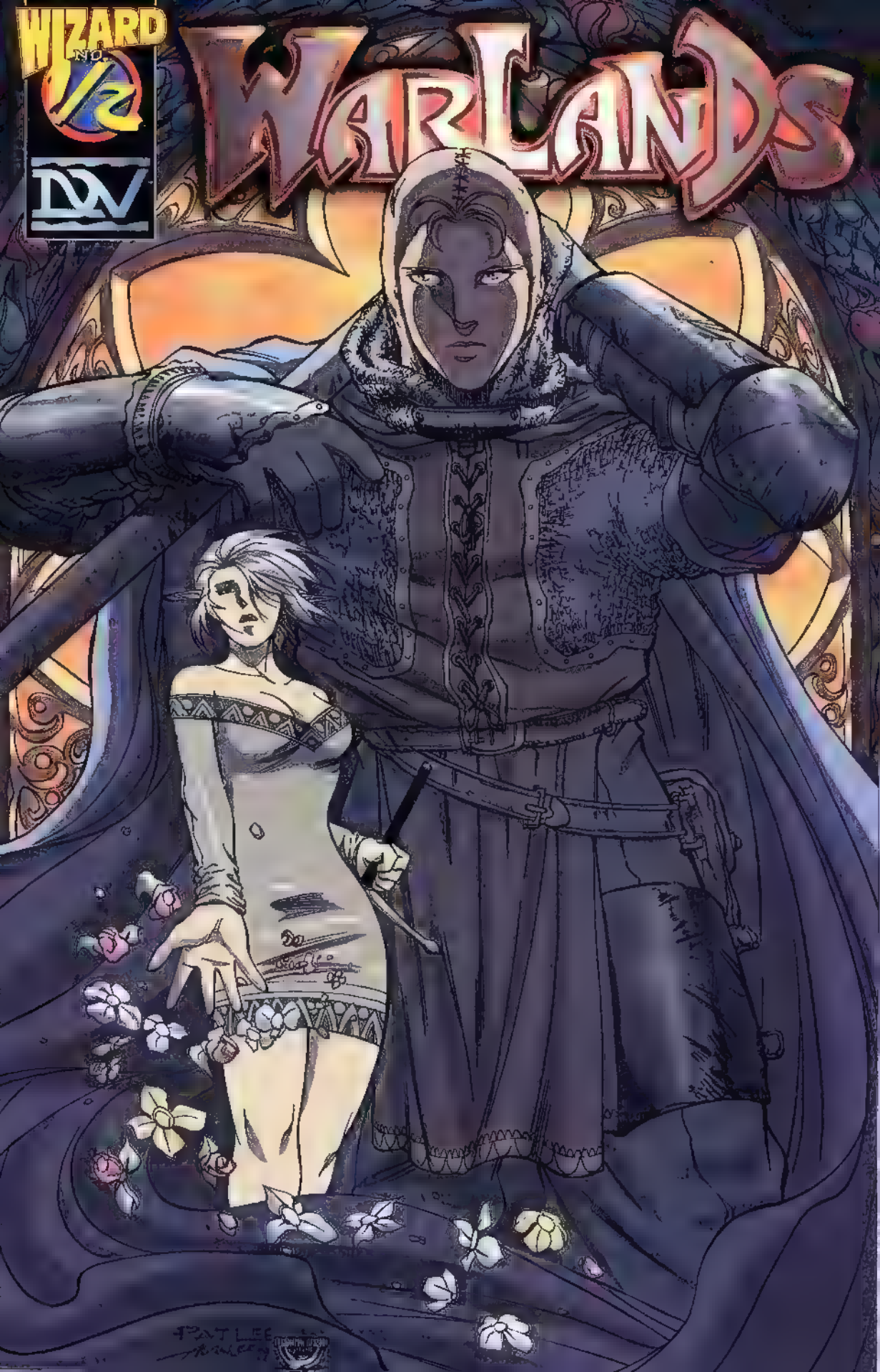
HAH! YOUR PLAN BEGINS TO UNRAVEL BEFORE YOUR EYES ALREADY MALAGEN!
PATIENCE KORZETH, IS A VIRTUE, UNLIKE YOUR CONTINUED EXISTENCE, WHICH IS MY WHIM. DO NOT FORGET YOUR PLACE IN MY GRAND DESIGN. MY PLAN IS PROCEEDING PERFECTLY.
AND IF AALOK TURNS THE POWER OF THE ARMOR AGAINST US?
THEN I WILL CRUSH HIM, JUST AS EASILY AS I WILL CRUSH YOU IF YOU CONTINUE TO SHOW SUCH INSOLENCE.
BRING THE BULK OF MY ARMY THROUGH THE PORTAL. WE DEPART AS SOON AS MY FORCES ARE ASSEMBLED.
YES MASTER.

IT MUST BE EXHILARATING FOR YOU BEING AMONG YOUR PEOPLE AGAIN AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME.
IT WOULD SEEM THAT WAY. BUT IT ISN'T. STRANGE, RETURNING HOME, SEEING MY FRIENDS AGAIN, MY FAMILY... I FEEL MORE ISOLATED THAN EVER. IN MY YEARS AWAY FROM THE GREAT FOREST I HAVE CHANGED MUCH.
AND YET MY PEOPLE SEEM NOT TO HAVE CHANGED AT ALL. WHEN I LEFT IT WAS TO PREVENT A CIVIL WAR THAT WOULD HAVE DESTROYED MY PEOPLE.
AND NOW THIS NEW ENEMY THREATENS TO DESTROY THEM ANYWAY.
YOU SHOULD NOT BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF.
ON THE CONTRARY. I AM AN ELVISH PRINCESS. EXILE OR NOT, IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT MY PEOPLE. EVEN GIVEN THE BEST OF INTENTIONS...
IF MY PEOPLE ARE HARMED, THEN THE FAULT WILL REST ON MY SHOULDERS.
THEIR SAFETY IS MY BURDEN TO BEAR. I WILL ACCEPT NO LESS.
YOU'D MAKE AN EXCELLENT QUEEN ELESSA.
PERHAPS. TANIA HAS CHOSEN A DIFFERENT PATH FOR ME HOWEVER. NEVERTHELESS, I THANK YOU FOR THE COMPLIMENT.

I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD. YOU'VE BARELY SPOKEN A WORD SINCE WE'VE LEFT, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE HUNGRY.
I'M SORRY, I'M DISTURBING YOU.
NO, IT IS I THAT SHOULD BE SORRY. YOU ARE RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR MY COUNTRYMEN.
I OWE A DEBT TO YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE THAT CAN *NEVER* BE REPAID.
WE ARE MAKING VERY GOOD TIME. TANIA MUST SMILE ON US THIS DAY. THOUGH I FEAR THAT OUR *QUEST* MAY COST THE LIVES OF *MANY* INNOCENTS.
SHAL'HAZAR HAS *FALLEN* ALREADY, AND IT WAS AMONG ONE OF MYRIDORN'S **GREATEST** REFUGES.

I'M SORRY JERELL. I SPEAK OUT OF TURN. I DIDN'T MEAN TO DISHONOR THE MEMORIES OF YOUR FALLEN COMRADES. I WILL LEAVE YOU ALONE TO YOUR THOUGHTS.
YOU SPEAK WITH AN ELOQUENCE I'VE SELDOM HEARD FROM A HUMAN SIR KNIGHT. I COULD ALMOST MISTAKE YOU FOR AN ELF IN THOSE CLOTHES.
WE OWE IT TO THOSE WE PROTECT TO FACE THE TRUTH, NO MATTER HOW DISHEARTENING IT MAY BE.
NO, NO, THAT'S QUITE ALRIGHT. I FIND NO FLAW IN YOUR REASONING. WE ARE SOLDIERS, YOU AND I.
...THANK YOU... I THINK...
CAPTAIN!
THERE IS A SHIP TO STARBOARD ON THE HORIZON!

DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE ANY SHIP THAT I'VE SEEN BEFORE...
WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS IN THE AIR? THEY LOOK LIKE HUGE BIRDS...
THOSE AREN'T BIRDS
THEY'RE DEMONS.
TO BE CONTINUED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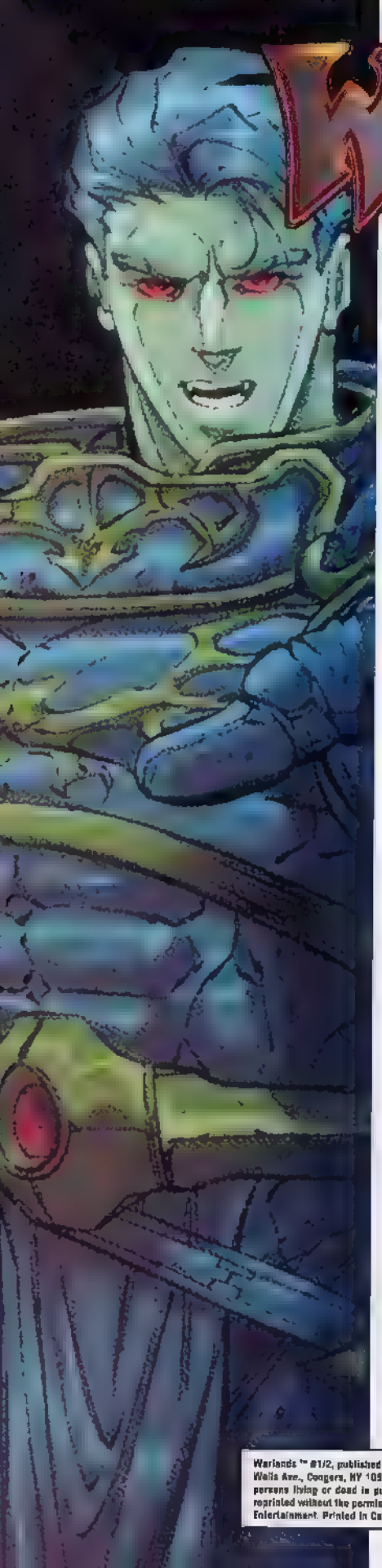
WARLANDS
PAT LEE



# WARLANDS™

1/2

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Adrian Tsang **WRITER**

Alvin Lee **INKER**

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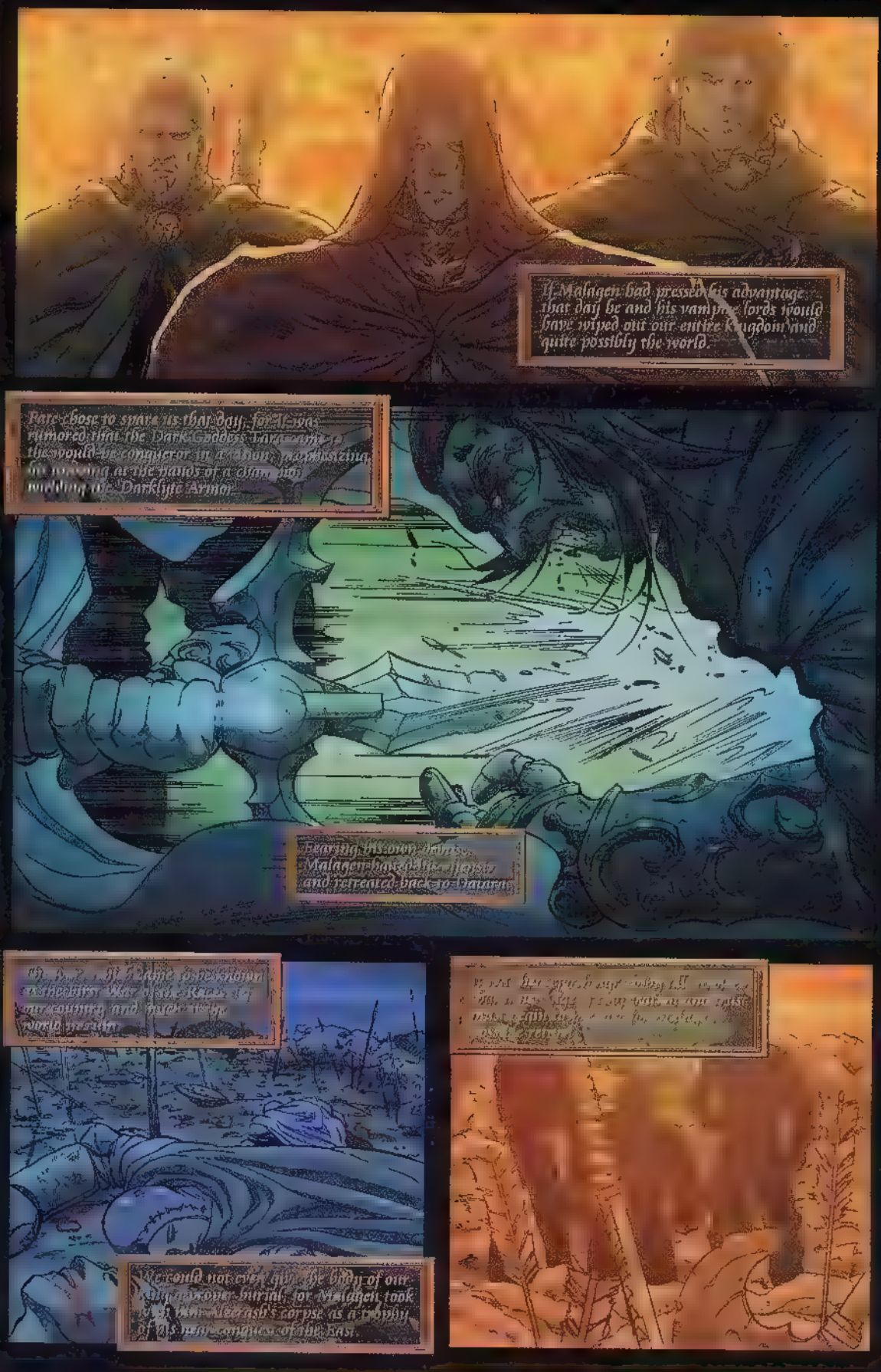
Three centuries ago the Vampire hordes of Datara fell on the Eastern kingdoms like a plague.
Malagen the Black, high Vampire King of Datara had routed our forces and sacked the Myrish Capital of Sonodara. We were outmatched, but our leader, King Alzerash, strengthened our resolve to fight.
engaged King in single combat ultimately defeating him on the field of battle. Utterly demoralized by the fall of the King, our army retreated in on itself and was nearly crushed by the ensuing assault.



If Malagen had pressed his advantage that day he and his vampire lords would have wiped out our entire kingdom and quite possibly the world.

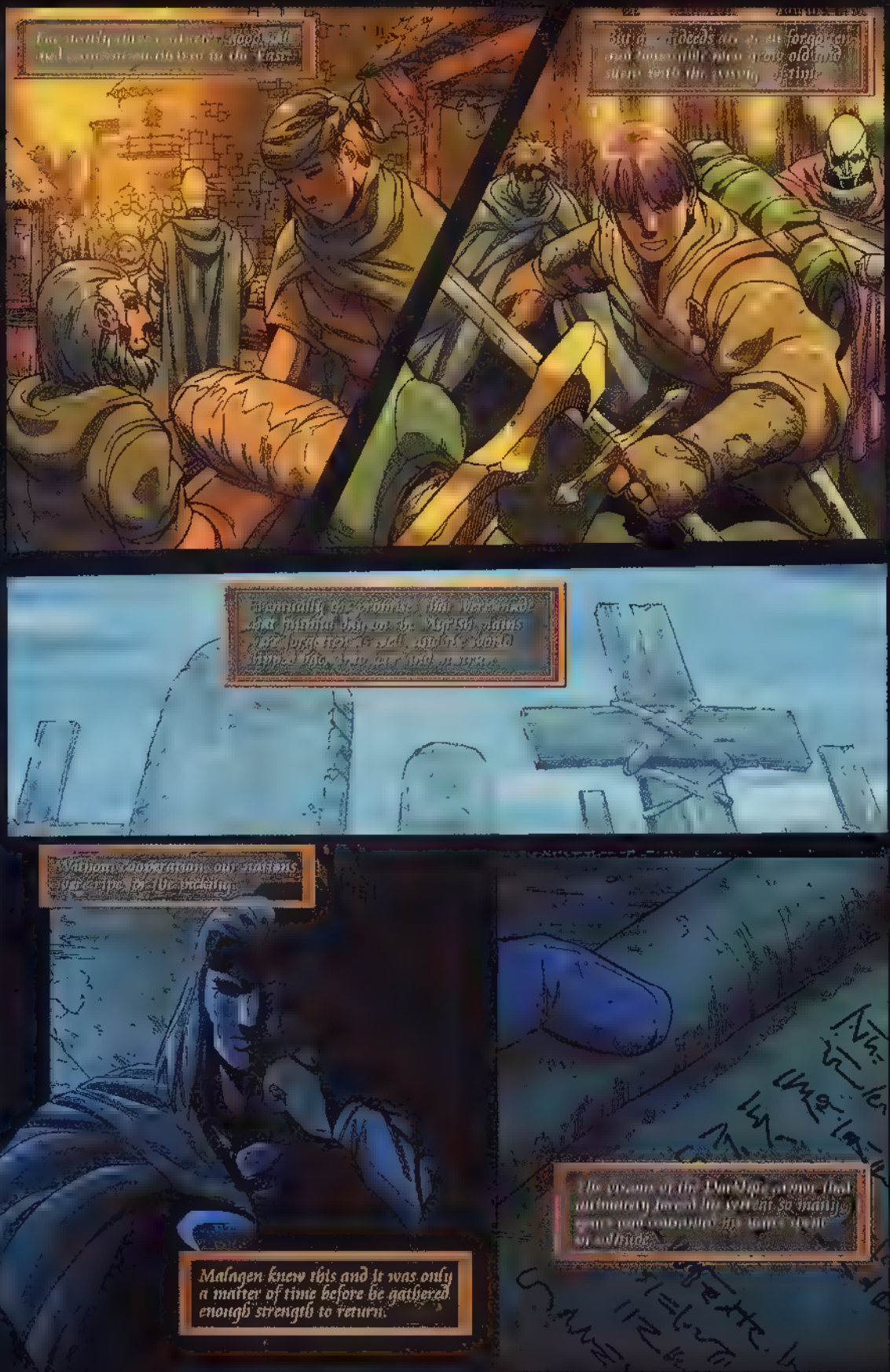
Fate chose to spare us that day, for it was rumored that the Dark Goddess Tara came to the would-be conqueror in a vision, prophesizing his [illegible] at the hands of a champion wielding the Darklyte Armor.

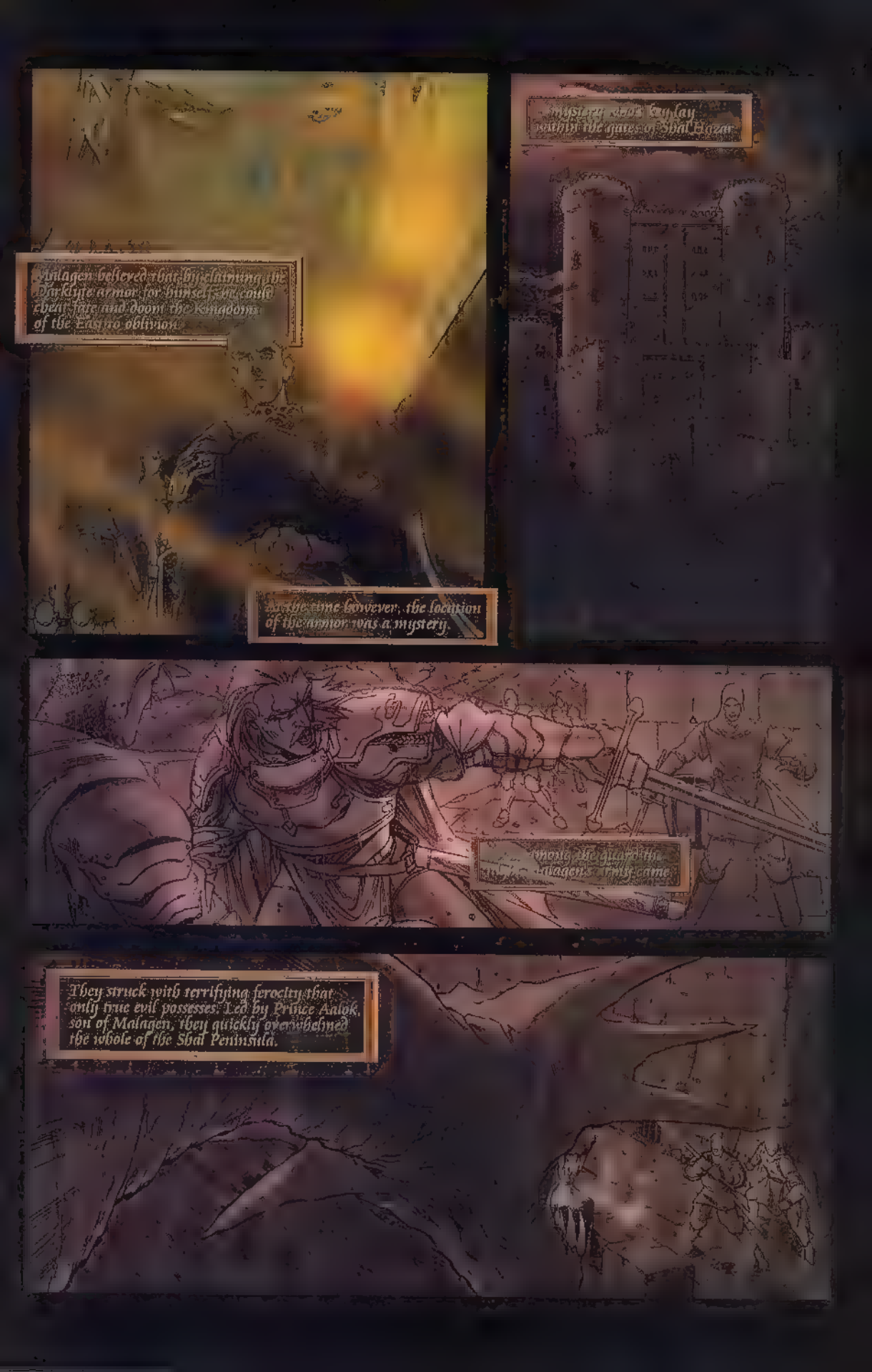
Fearing his own demise, Malagen had [illegible] and retreated back to Dataras.

[illegible] came to be known as the First War of the Reeds, [illegible] our country and much [illegible] world [illegible].

We could not even give the body of our king a proper burial, for Malagen took [illegible] Alzerash's corpse as a trophy of his near conquest of the East.

[illegible]


For nearly three centuries good and evil remained locked in the Vaseo.
But as deeds are never forgotten and knowledge never really old and gone into the waning darkness.
Eventually as prophesied, the Werewolf and Immortal Day of the Mar'Sh plains were progressing well, and the world turned this way to face their doom in style.
Without cooperation, our nations were ripe for the picking.
Malagen knew this and it was only a matter of time before he gathered enough strength to return.
The dreams of the Mar'Sh grew that intimately loved the evil as many were consecrated the name of Malagen.



Malagen believed that by claiming the Darklyte armor for himself, he could cheat fate and doom the Kingdoms of the Eastro oblivion.

At the time however, the location of the armor was a mystery.

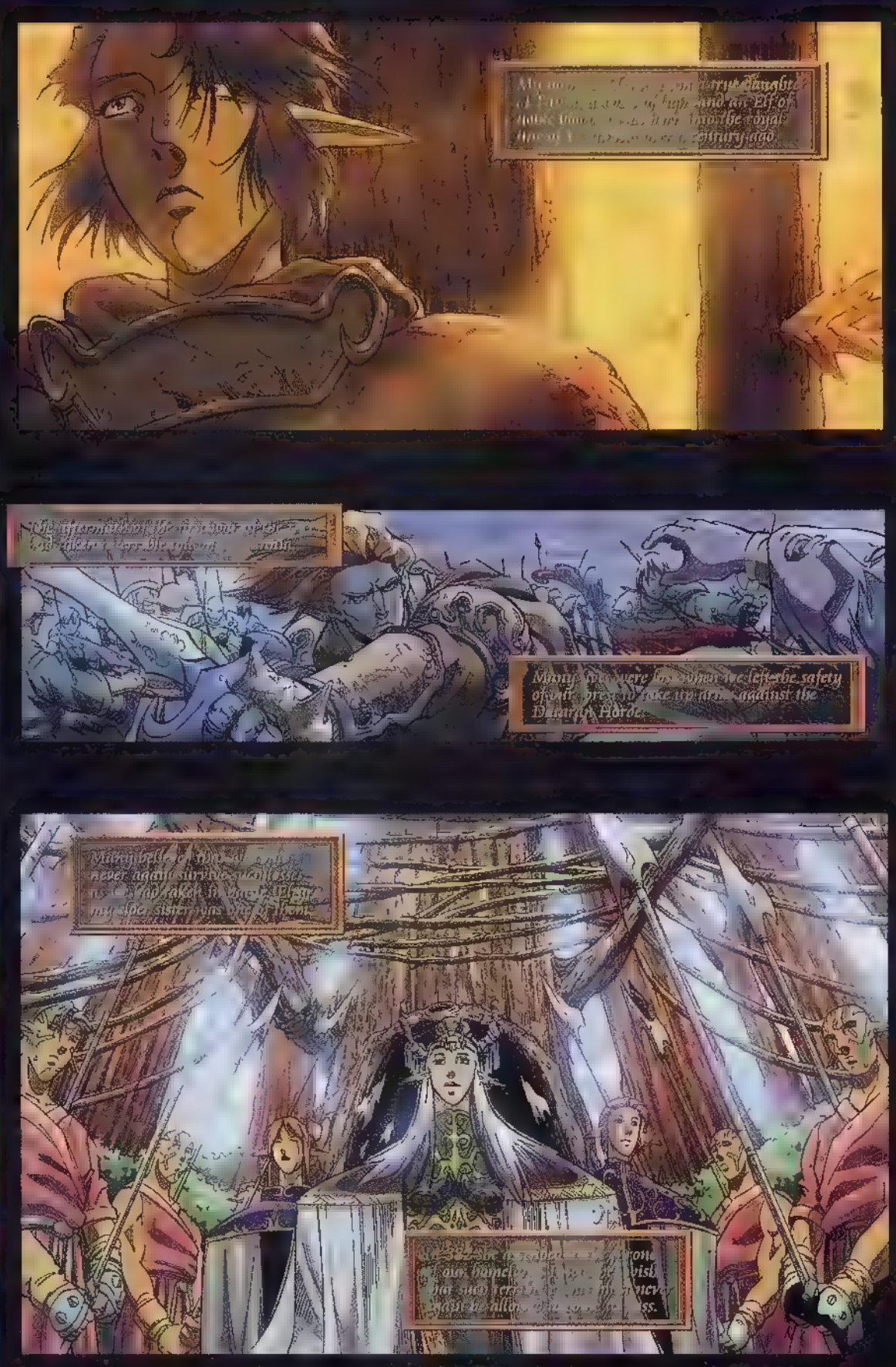
mystery who's key lay within the gates of Shal Hazar.

among the guard the Malagen's army came.

They struck with terrifying ferocity that only true evil possesses. Led by Prince Aalok, son of Malagen, they quickly overwhelmed the whole of the Shal Peninsula.

* See Warlands Issue #1 for details.

In the aftermath of Slade's arrest, I and my newfound companions, who had also survived the attack, set out on a quest that would change the face of Warlands forever--
Though it seemed clear that the Darklyte armor would decide the outcome of the war, no one could have predicted what would happen next--
Or the price that would be decreed on us for all the blood that would be spilt.



Soon, we were divided equally between Elfyra supporters and my own.
Elfyra was the queen however, so ours became a mask of rebellion.

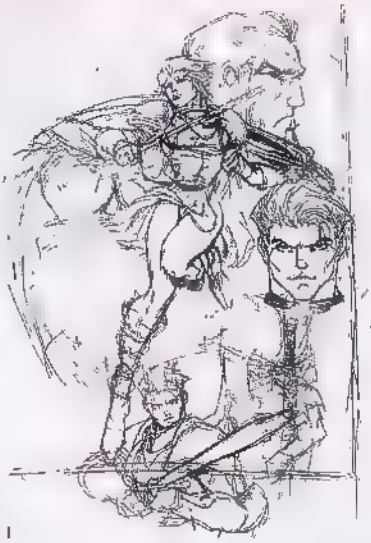
Tensions ran high.

In the matter of a few moments eight of my people were dead killed by their own kin
Only my bloodshed would follow it. I realized at once that my sister would eventually destroy all Elvendom.
I left it to my brother to avenge their deaths.
Now I roam the countryside learning the arts and lore of the people of the Eastern Continent.

Fate brought me to the Myrish city of Sha Hazar the night the Datarans returned...
...and it was there in the midst of all that death and destruction that the world found hope.
Banded together by destiny, we and the others that would join us along our journey would fight against Malag[illegible] and the Dataran Horde-
...And it would ultimately be the events that we bore [illegible] to that would decide the [illegible] an entire world...
To be continued

# WARLANDS™ SKETCHBOOK

*Check out the thoughts that go into making Warlands, told to you by creator Pat Lee!!*



*Many of these sketches are ancient history for me. I thought that the public might have wanted to see some of my earlier designs and hopefully felt that my style had changed for the better. I love what I'm doing now, but I know I still have a lot more to improve.*

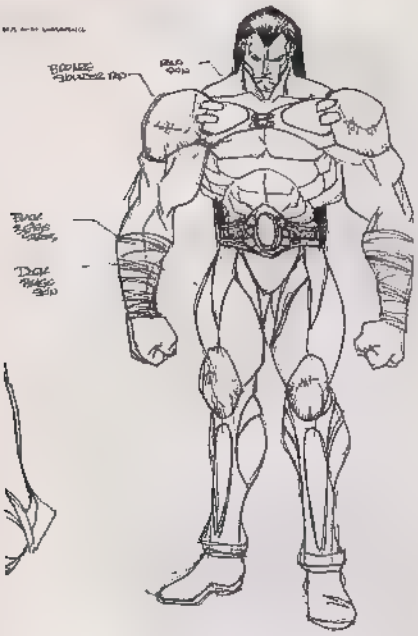
*This was a cover design for one of the books. I wasn't sure which one it was going to be though.*

*This sketch was a preliminary sketch for the main cover created 3 years ago.*

*Malagen's armor for battles.*

*Left side is one of the very first sketches of Ellessa, drawn over 4 years ago.*

WARLANDS™



*This was the first design of Shrogran, Malagen's bodyguard.*

*A cover sketch of the Berzerker and his future wife...Hmmmm. Will he have one?*

# SKETCHBOOK

# WARLANDS™ SKETCHBOOK

*A design of the royal vampire king that was never used. Date of drawing was 1997.*

*A character that was decided to be used for another one of our books. Also designed in 1997.*

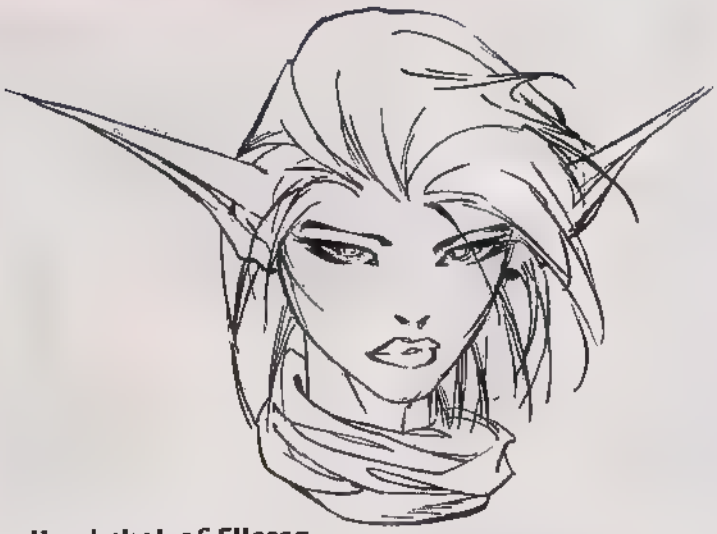
# WARLANDS™ SKETCHBOOK

*Many dragon head designs for the whole Warlands series*

ARKANE VAMPIRE LEADER
OF THE WEST

TESSAN- VAMPIRE LEADER
OF THE SOUTH

***These are the very first sketches of the vampires. Some of the names were different at the time.***

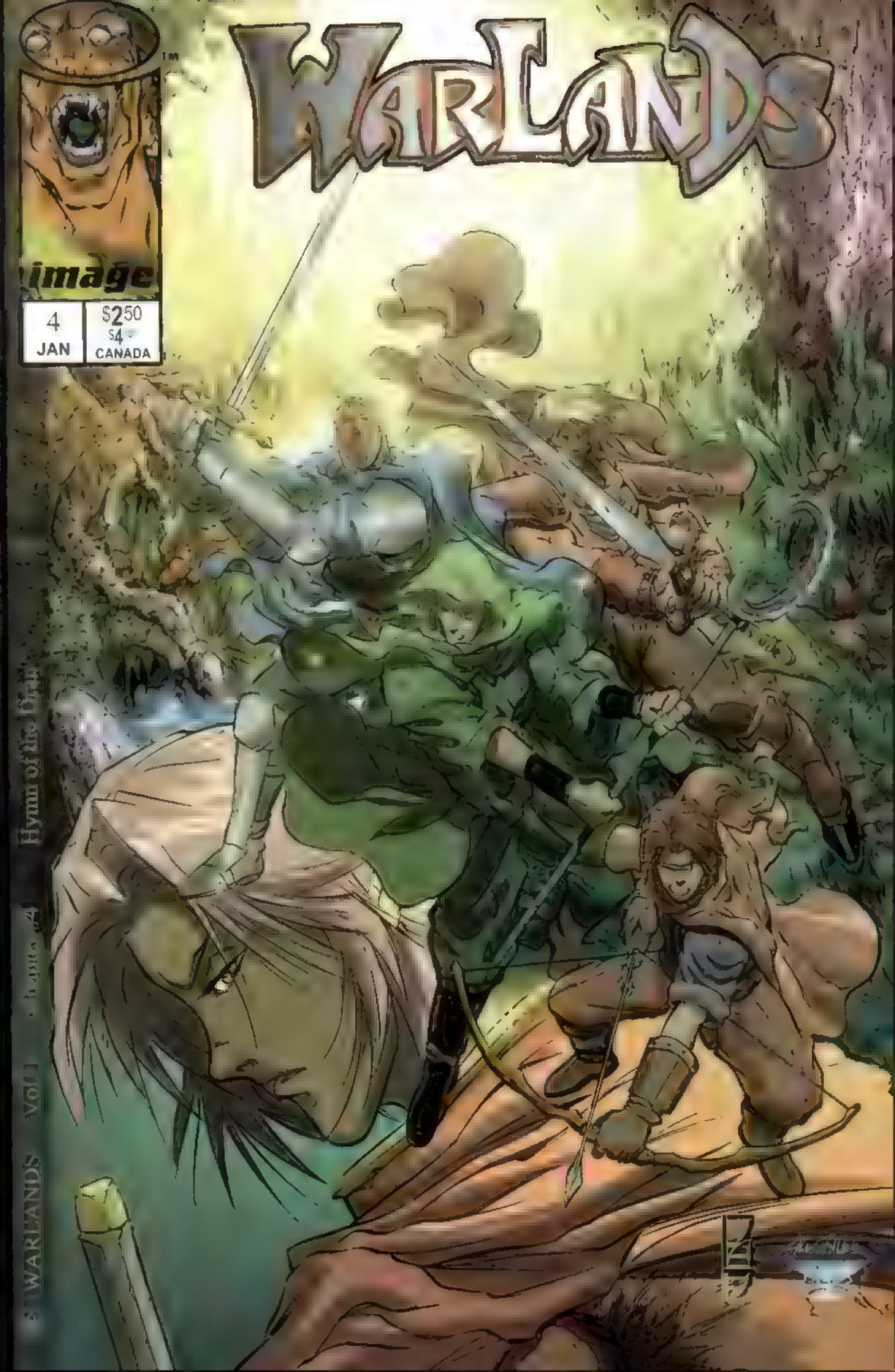


*Head shot of Ellessa of which I'm very embarrassed.*

*Ellessa's costume design. She looks somewhat similar now. I like her uniform now. It looks a lot more natural.*



WARLANDS™ SKETCHBOOK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Hymn of the Dead
WARLANDS Vol 1

# WARLANDS™

CREATED BY
PAT LEE AND ADRIAN TSANG

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I WANT A DOZEN ARCHERS ON THE RAILING AND AN ARMED BOARDING PARTY ON THE LOWER DECK *IMMEDIATELY*.
TELL THE LITANA AND THE BESILN TO FOLLOW US IN. WE'RE GOING IN TO INVESTIGATE.
RIGHT AWAY CAPTAIN.
...SO MANY DEMONS... WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?
A MAGE PERHAPS?
THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM. EVEN THE MOST *SKILLED* MAGE WOULD SUMMON NO MORE THAN ONE DEMON AT A TIME.
MEANING?
MEANING SOME MAGE HAS MADE A *GREVIOUS* ERROR, OR THOSE DEMONS ARE SUMMONING *THEMSELVES*.
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...
IT HAS TO DO WITH THEIR RELIGION. THEY'RE *DEMON HUNTERS*...

CHODAN HAS BLESSED US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A GLORIOUS DEATH IN BATTLE G'DAR!
THEN WE DIE TOGETHER MY BROTHER-BUT NOT BEFORE MANY MORE DEMONS TASTE MY BLADE...
THE INTER-PLANAR GATE IS OPENING AGAIN KATAL! COME, LET US FINISH THIS!

YOU NEEDN'T BE IN SUCH HASTE G'DAR. THERE ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH DEMONS TO GO AROUND.
THEY'RE COMING AROUND FOR ANOTHER PASS... BE READY...
I SEE THEM.

AAAH!!
SKURCH!!!
DIE DEMON.
FIGHT WELL MY BROTHER.
THE GREAT WARRIOR CALLS TO ME.
KATAL!
UHHH...

COME BACK AND FIGHT DEMONS!
YOU KILLED MY BROTHER!
I WILL TAKE YOUR LIVES AS PAYMENT!
AAAAAAAH!!
SKLURRCHH!

MY GOD... THAT MAN IS INSANE...
JERELL! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET!
OUR JOB HERE IS TO FIND PROOF OF A THREAT SO THAT THE ELVISH ARMY WILL LEND AID TO MY PEOPLE...
WHEN I TUG ON THE ROPE PULL ME BACK IN...
JERELL! WAIT! IT'S TOO...
AND THAT DRAN MAY BE THE ONLY ONE THAT MIGHT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...

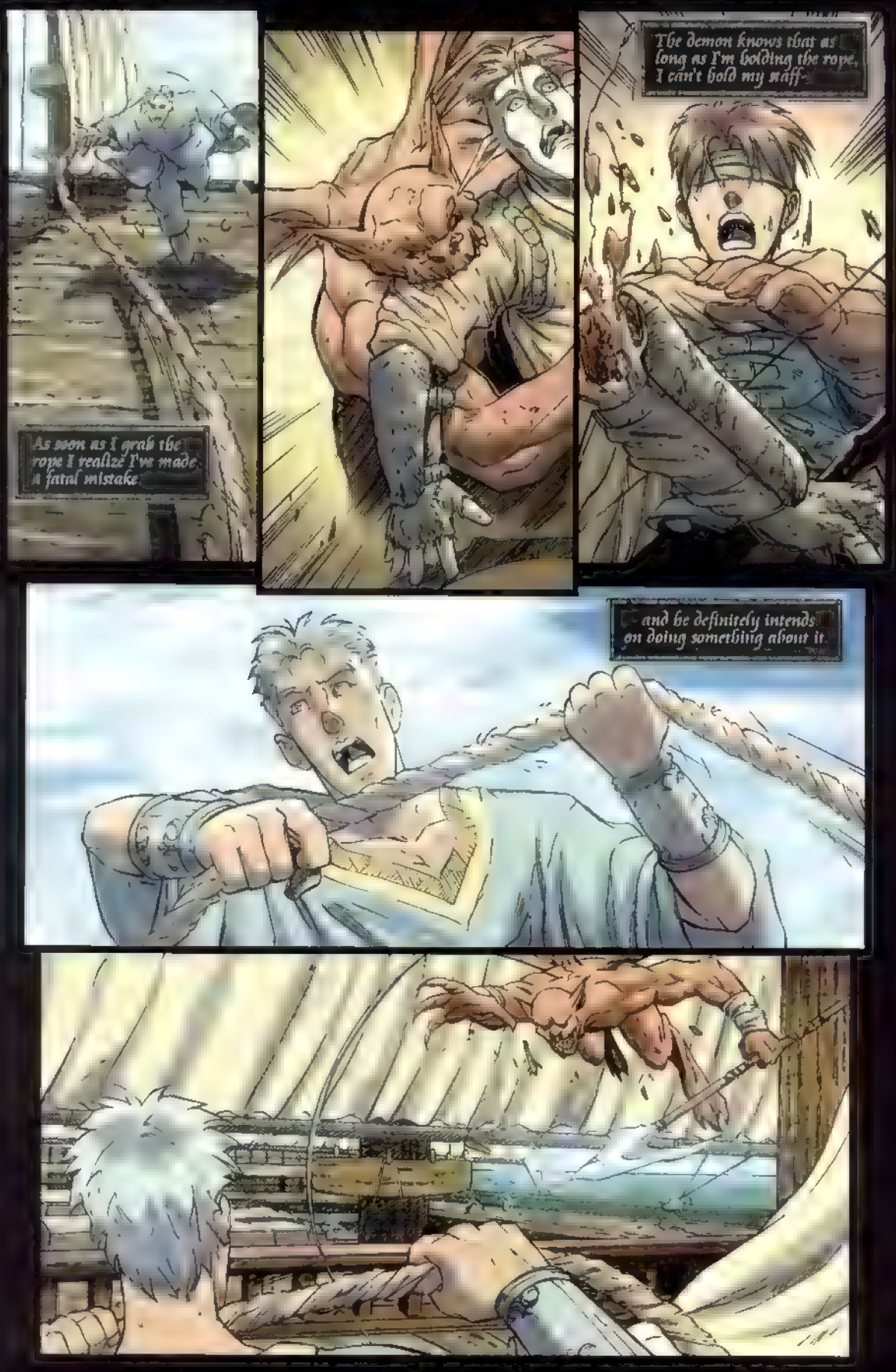
DAMN...
FLOOOSH!
ALRIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BUY ENOUGH TIME FOR JERELL TO SUCCEED. DROP THE ANCHOR. I WANT FOUR MEN *MANNING* THIS ROPE AT ALL TIMES.
AS SOON AS IT EVEN *TENSES* I WANT THAT MAN BACK ON THE DECK OF THIS SHIP!

Here they come.
...TAKE AIM
THERE'S TOO MANY!
LOOK OUT!!!
FIRE!

ZEPH! GET BELOW DECK!!!

ICHHHH!!

THAT'S HIM! PULL LADS!
KEEP THEM AWAY FROM THE ROPE!!!
LOOK OUT!
THE ROPE!!!


As soon as I grab the rope I realize I've made a fatal mistake.
The demon knows that as long as I'm holding the rope, I can't hold my staff.
and he definitely intends on doing something about it.

Just as I prepare to join my ancestors, I feel something.
Something that's coming from Zeph.
Feels like a spell, but more raw somehow, more primal.
The demon notices it as well.
My bones start aching from the sheer power of Zeph's Magik.
STOP!
And then suddenly, like the drawing of an enormous breath, the power is contained. Contained -and in the next instant-

Released
FWAKOOM!
FWOOOP!
HERRRAAA!!

Z-ZEPH...?
OUT OF THE WAY DELEZAR! WE'LL HANDLE THE ROPE.
UHHH...
ZEPH!!!!!
THUD!
ZEPH! ZEPH! ARE YOU ALRIGHT.

ON THREE-ONE... TWO...
THREE!
JERELL! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!
KAFF--KAFF I'M FINE...BUT OUR FRIEND HERE IS IN NEED OF *IMMEDIATE* ATTENTION!
IS HE ALIVE?
I THINK SO-BUT *JUST* BARELY...

DELEZAR! IS ZEPH ALRIGHT???
I--DON'T KNOW...I FEAR HIS BODY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RECOVER FROM THE RELEASE OF HIS MAGIK..
IN THE LOWER GALLEY...
CURSE THOSE DEMONS...
MARISANA, WHERE ARE THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES!
SSSSSSSS...

I'LL GET THEM!
SIGNAL THE LITANA AND THE BESILN TO PULL INTO AN ESCORT FORMATION ..WE'RE MUCH TOO VULNERABLE HERE...
WE NEED TO GET ZEPH...
DELEZAR! LOOK OUT!
NOW YOU DIE HUMAN!
Fwip

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT DEMON!

CHUNK!

HOLD IT DOWN DELEZAR!

THIS IS A *RARE* OPPORTUNITY. LET'S NOT WASTE IT.

THIS LITTLE IMP MAY HAVE THE *INFORMATION* THAT THE ELVES REQUIRE.

NO! LEAVE IT! IT'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

WHAT???

HAH! YOUR PATHETIC POWERS MEAN *NOTHING* TO ME HUMAN!

SEND ME *BACK* TO MY DOMAIN, I WILL TELL YOU NOTHING!

SO YOU SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE. GOOD. THEN YOU CAN TELL US *EXACTLY* WHY YOU'RE HERE.

YOUR WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE TORMENTS THAT MY MASTER WILL HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU..WHEN I TELL HIM OF MY *MISTREATMENT* AT YOUR HANDS PUNY MAGE!

HE WILL FEED YOU TO THE FLAMES OF HELL AND BURN YOUR SOULS TO ASHES!

HE WILL CUT OUT YOUR ENTRAILS AND....

UHHHH...

K-KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ME!

KEEP WHO AWAY?

--YOUR LEADER!!! THE SMALL ONE WITH TANIA'S* EYES!!!

--ZEPH?

--PLAY ALONG... THIS COULD WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

I THINK IT'S TALKING ABOUT --

* *Elvish Goddess of Light.*

*Goddess of Darkness.

NO. YOU WILL RETURN TO ADARA WITH THE OTHERS.

I WILL PRESS FORWARD AND TRY AND *PREVENT* THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR' FROM FALLING INTO THE **WRONG** HANDS.

NOT A CHANCE. MY HOME IS IN JUST AS MUCH DANGER AS YOURS. I'M COMING *WITH* YOU.

JERELL IS RIGHT. THERE IS TOO MUCH AT STAKE HERE FOR US TO BACK OUT NOW.

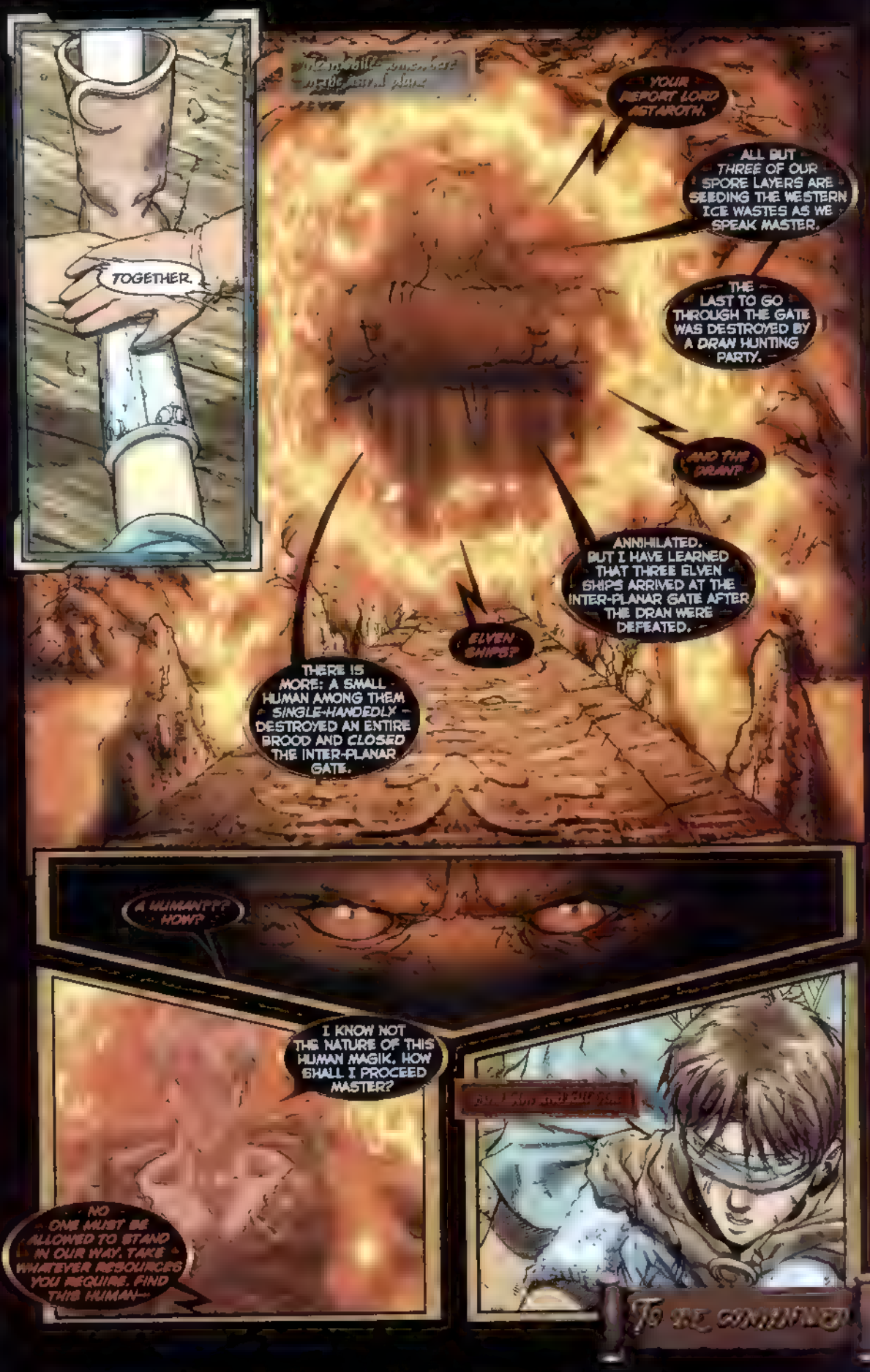
BESIDES, YOU'RE GOING TO *NEED* OUR HELP.

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED THE HELP OF THE SKIRMISHERS *TOO*. WE GO TOGETHER, OR NOT AT ALL.

WE GO TOGETHER.

.....

...IT SEEMS YOU'VE ALL MADE UP YOUR MINDS. VERY WELL.


TOGETHER.
YOUR REPORT LORD ASTAROTH.
ALL BUT THREE OF OUR SPORE LAYERS ARE SEEDING THE WESTERN ICE WASTES AS WE SPEAK MASTER.
THE LAST TO GO THROUGH THE GATE WAS DESTROYED BY A DRAN HUNTING PARTY.
AND THE DRAN?
ANNIHILATED. BUT I HAVE LEARNED THAT THREE ELVEN SHIPS ARRIVED AT THE INTER-PLANAR GATE AFTER THE DRAN WERE DEFEATED.
ELVEN SHIPS?
THERE IS MORE: A SMALL HUMAN AMONG THEM SINGLE-HANDEDLY DESTROYED AN ENTIRE BROOD AND CLOSED THE INTER-PLANAR GATE.
A HUMAN??? HOW?
I KNOW NOT THE NATURE OF THIS HUMAN MAGIK. HOW SHALL I PROCEED MASTER?
NO ONE MUST BE ALLOWED TO STAND IN OUR WAY. TAKE WHATEVER RESOURCES YOU REQUIRE. FIND THIS HUMAN—
TO BE CONTINUED

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Vol.1 Chapter #5 A Call to Arms

# WarLands


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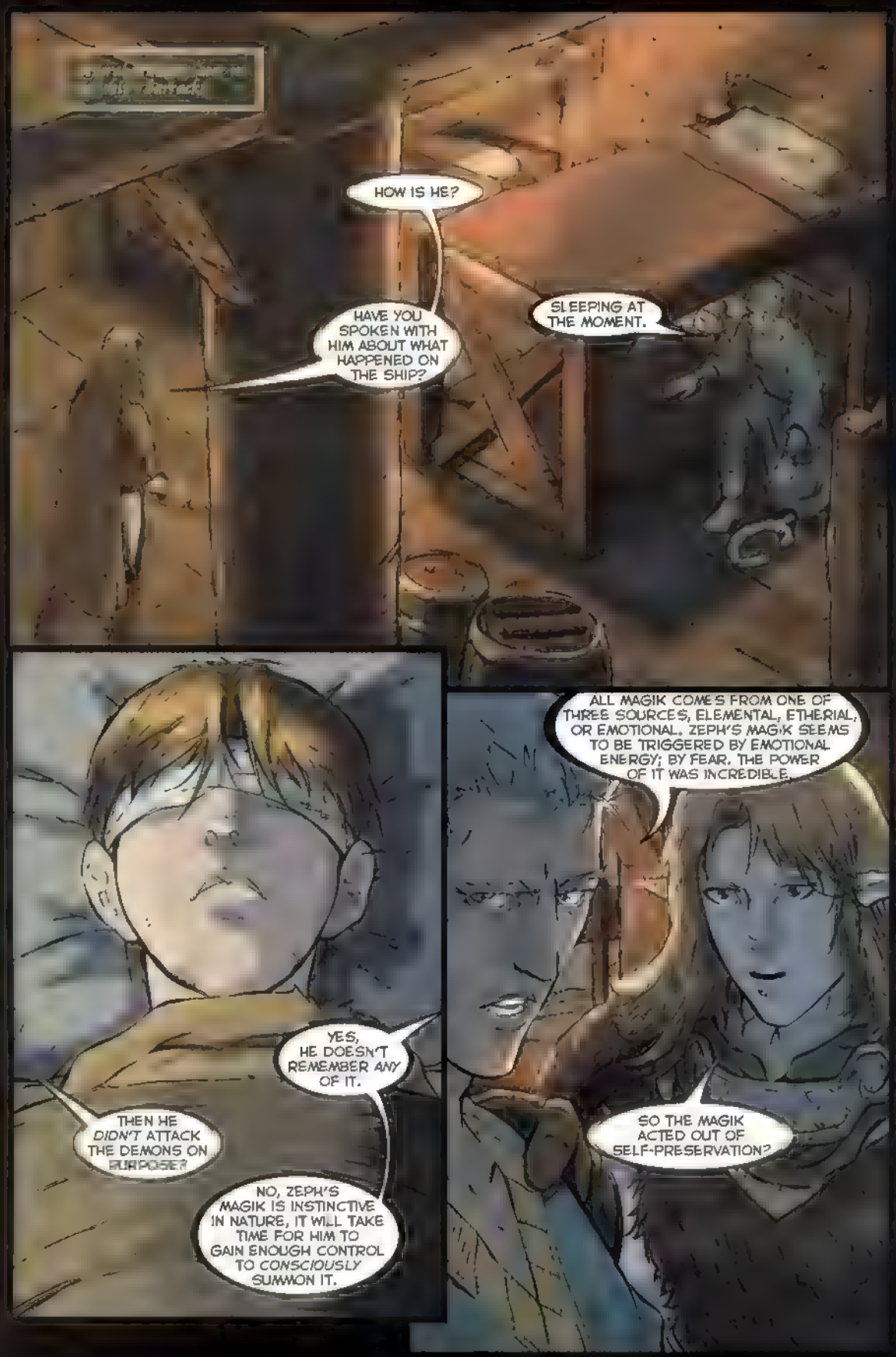
WE'VE FINISHED SALVAGE OPERATIONS ON THE DRAN VESSEL CAPTAIN.
WHAT DID YOU FIND?
THREE STONE WORTH OF WEAPONS, AND TWO WORTH OF FOODSTUFFS.
STOW THE SALVAGE AND CONTINUE THE REPAIRS. I WANT TO BE READY TO MOVE WITHIN THE HOUR. I'M GOING DOWN BELOW, YOU'RE IN COMMAND.
YES CAPTAIN.


HOW IS HE?
HAVE YOU SPOKEN WITH HIM ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED ON THE SHIP?
SLEEPING AT THE MOMENT.
ALL MAGIK COMES FROM ONE OF THREE SOURCES, ELEMENTAL, ETHERIAL, OR EMOTIONAL. ZEPH'S MAGIK SEEMS TO BE TRIGGERED BY EMOTIONAL ENERGY; BY FEAR. THE POWER OF IT WAS INCREDIBLE.
SO THE MAGIK ACTED OUT OF SELF-PRESERVATION?
YES, HE DOESN'T REMEMBER *ANY* OF IT.
THEN HE *DIDN'T* ATTACK THE DEMONS ON PURPOSE?
NO, ZEPH'S MAGIK IS INSTINCTIVE IN NATURE, IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR HIM TO GAIN ENOUGH CONTROL TO *CONSCIOUSLY* SUMMON IT.

I don't think so. Zeph's magik could have wiped out every living thing on the deck of the ship had it chose, it did not, it attacked only the demons.
The attack engulfed the entire ship, yet not a single one of our companions, and not a single member of your crew was injured by it.
More than just survival instinct is at work here.
Are you suggesting that Zeph's magik is somehow alive?!?
YOU WANTED ME TO TELL YOU WHEN THE DRAN REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS...
PERHAPS IN A SENSE, WHATEVER THE CASE, IT SEEMS TO HAVE SOME SORT OF CONSCIOUSNESS BEHIND IT.
AND THOUGH I DON'T KNOW IF THAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS ZEPH, I DO KNOW THAT IT HAS INCREDIBLY GOOD AIM...
EXCUSE ME CAPTAIN.

*Meanwhile, unaware that our heroes have learned of [illegible] Vardemis [illegible] locate [illegible]*

I *STILL* DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR' SIRE. WHY DO WE MOVE WITH STEALTH IN THE NIGHT INSTEAD OF LEADING OUR ARMIES TO GLORY?

THIS BOOK *HOLDS* THE KEY TO UNLOCKING OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY VARDEMIS; THOUGH THE HUMANS ARE TOO YOUNG A RACE TO REALIZE IT'S IMPORTANCE.

IT IS A MAP. A MAP WRITTEN IN AN OBSCURE LANGUAGE UNSPOKEN SINCE THE TIME OF FAERIE--

--THE DARKLYTE ARMOR IS LOCATED SOMEWHERE IN THE MOUNTAINS SURROUNDING DRAGON'S PEACE. WITHOUT A MAP WE COULD WANDER THOSE MOUNTAINS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS AND FIND *NOTHING*.

TO WHAT END MY PRINCE? VICTORY IS WITHIN OUR GRASP. SURELY, WE HAVE ALREADY *DEFEATED* THE PROPHECY.

MILITARY VICTORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ASSURED TO US VARDEMIS. BUT THE PROPHECY SPEAKS OF OUR DEFEAT BY MYSTICAL MEANS.

ANYTHING THAT STANDS IN OUR WAY MUST BE BENT TO OUR WILL OR DESTROYED.
IF THE DARKLYTE ARMOR IS EVEN HALF AS POWERFUL AS IS WRITTEN, WE MUST TAKE NO CHANCES WITH ITS FATE.
THIS WORLD WAS NOT MADE FOR BEINGS SUCH AS YOU AND I VARDEMIS. THE CHILDREN OF THE OTHER GODS SHUN US, AND SUNLIGHT CAN DESTROY US.
TO HAVE DOMINION IN THIS REALM WE CAN BROOK NO ERROR.
I SEE NOW WHY MALAGEN CHOSE TO ENOBLE YOU ABOVE THE OTHER DATARAN LORDS MY PRINCE.
PERHAPS ONCE YOU HAVE ATTAINED THE DARKLYTE ARMOR YOU WILL TAKE IT'S POWER FOR YOURSELF INSTEAD.
YOU SPEAK TREASON VARDEMIS?
NO MY PRINCE--

— I SPEAK TO THE FUTURE KAHN OF DATARA.
THANK YOU BOTH FOR COMING. I REAL ZE THIS IS ALL QUITE SHORT NOTICE.

THE MAN BEHIND ME IS GENERAL ALDUS, COMMANDER OF THE MYRISH ARMY.
--I'M SURE YOU ALL NOTICE THE EMPTY CHAIR. QUEEN ELTYRA HAS *REGRETFULLY* NOT RESPONDED TO OUR INVITATION.
BAH, FORGET THE DAMNED ELVES. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LIFT A FINGER FOR THE LIKES OF US.
I'M INCLINED TO AGREE. THE INVASION STARTED VERY NEAR YATTANNIA'S SOUTHERN BORDER, IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH TO GET THEIR ATTENTION. I DON'T BELIEVE WE'LL SEE AID FROM THEIR FORCES.
VERY WELL, LET'S GET ON WITH IT SHALL WE? TIME IS *NOT* ON OUR SIDE, SO I'M GOING TO DISPENSE WITH THE PLEASANTRIES.
FRANKLY GENTLEMEN, I NEED TO KNOW ONE THING: DO I HAVE YOUR SUPPORT *AGAINST* THE DATARANS?

YOU'LL NOT BE COUNTING US *OUT* OF THIS ONE LORIEN. I DIDN'T BRING ALL THOSE MEN DOWN IN THE COURTYARD **JUST** FOR SHOW. WE'VE BEEN WAITIN' *CENTURIES* FOR THE DATARANS TO SHOW THEIR FACES.
-THANK YOU KING GHERHYN. AND YOU KING ASSIVAR?
VANTYRE HAS A VESTED INTEREST IN ENSURING THAT THERE IS A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR ALONG IT'S BORDER. WE WILL OFFER WHAT HELP WE CAN.
EXCELLENT. GENERAL ALDUS WILL ELABORATE ON OUR *CURRENT* SITUATION.

* See Warlands Issue #1 for details.

IF WE HAD LAUNCHED AN ATTACK EARLY IN, IT MIGHT HAVE PRESSED THE DATARANS INTO ACTION BEFORE WE WERE READY
ONCE THE DATARANS ARE *FAR* ENOUGH FROM THEIR LINES OF SUPPLY, WE CAN SEND A *SMALL* FORCE AROUND THEIR MAIN ARMY TO TAKE DOWN THE PORTAL--
--AND CUT OFF THEIR LINES OF SUPPLY EFFECTIVELY *TRAPPING* THEM INSIDE OUR BORDERS.
A SENSIBLE PLAN. ARE WE LIKELY TO RECEIVE *AID* FROM ANY OF THE OTHERS?

I'VE SENT MESSAGES TO THE RYOTIANS AND TO THE DRAN, BUT THEY WILL TAKE TIME TO ARRIVE. WE'RE ON OUR OWN FOR THE TIME BEING.
YOU'RE BOTH INSANE.
YOU'RE OUT TO *TRAP* AN ARMY THAT BY ALL ACCOUNTS **OUTNUMBERS** US AT LEAST 2 TO 1. THESE ARE *DATARANS*. THEY'RE *VAMPIRES*.
THEY'RE STRONGER AND FASTER THAN US, AND THEY DON'T TIRE AS EASILY. THEY'LL FIGHT WITHOUT FOOD. THEY'LL FIGHT *WITHOUT* SLEEP. THEY'LL EVEN FIGHT *WITHOUT* WEAPONS, BECAUSE ANYTHING WE DO WON'T BE HALF AS BAD AS WHAT THEIR LEADERS WILL DO TO THEM IF THEY DON'T
THE *ONLY* LINES OF SUPPLY THEY NEED IS LIVING BLOOD. AND AS SOON AS WE START HACKING AWAY AT THEM, THEIR SUPPLY LINE WILL BE *US*. THAT'S IF WE'RE LUCKY.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO?

IF WE AREN'T THEY'RE GOING TO START TAKING SOME OF OUR OWN SOLDIERS TO REPLACE THEIR LOSSES THEY DID IT IN THE FIRST WAR OF THE RACES, AND THEY'LL DO IT AGAIN HERE.

FIRST, YOU CAN FORGET EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT CONVENTIONAL TACTICS. THEN...

YOUR MAJESTY! THE DATARANS ARE MOBILIZING!!!

IT'S BEGUN.
WE ARE SPREADING OUR FORCES TOO THINLY. YOU PLACE TOO MUCH VALUE IN THE LOYALTY OF THE OTHER LORDS.
ON THE CONTRARY KORZETH. I PLACE NO VALUE ON THE LOYALTY OF YOU OR THE OTHER LORDS WHATSOEVER.
I DON'T LIKE THIS MALAGEN.
THIS BUSINESS OF AALOK AND VARDEMIS GOING OFF TO FIND THE ARMOR WITHOUT US.
AND WHERE ARE TESSAN AND NASIRA? THEIR TROOPS WILL NOT FOLLOW YOU AS READILY YOUR PRECIOUS IMPERIAL GUARD.
ON THE CONTRARY KORZETH. I PLACE NO VALUE ON LOYALTY WHATSOEVER.
TESSAN AND NASIRA ARE ABROAD REVENTING THE RYOTIANS FROM INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN OUR LITTLE WAR. THEY WILL RETURN IN TIME FOR THE BATTLE. THEY'LL NOT TAKE THE CHANCE THAT I MIGHT USE THEIR FORCES UNNECESSARILY AND WEAKEN THEIR CLANS.

AS FOR VARDEMIS AND AALOK, I AM WELL AWARE OF WHERE BOTH THEIR LOYALTIES LIE. VARDEMIS' CLAN IS SMALL. HE WILL ATTACH HIMSELF TO WHOMEVER HE SEES IN THE STRONGEST POSITION AFTER THE OUTCOME OF THIS CAMPAIGN.
REST ASSURED THAT PERSON SHALL BE ME. ALL THINGS PROCEED EXACTLY AS I HAVE PLANNED. THE ELVES WILL NOT INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THIS WAR UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE, TESSAN AND NASIRA SEE TO THOSE RACES NOT DIRECTLY IN OUR PATH. ONLY THE HUMANS AND THE DWARVES STAND AGAINST US.
YOUR ONLY CONCERN IS WITH THE MOBILIZATION OF OUR FORCES.
IF YOU HAVE NOTHING TO THAT END TO CONTRIBUTE, YOU MAY STAY SILENT. I FIND THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE IRRITATING.
YES MY KAHN.

HAVE YOU COME TO FINISH ME OFF?
WE TENDED YOUR WOUNDS. BY THE GODS! THIS MAN SAVED YOUR LIFE!
FINISH YOU OFF? WE MIGHT BE CURIOUS OF YOUR INTENTIONS, BUT WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO KILL YOU FOR IT!
AH, SO IT WAS YOU THAT PULLED ME OUT OF THE WATER
I AM G'DAR, SON OF AMAGOS. I OWE YOU MY LIFE. ASK OF ME ANY TASK, AND IT WILL BE DONE.
JERELL OF KELLAYRIN HOLD, AND MY COMPANIONS, ELESSA, MARISANA, AND DELEZAR - AS FOR GRATITUDE I'LL SETTLE FOR EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT WHAT THOSE DEMONS WERE DOING HERE

IT IS A RITE OF PASSAGE FOR EVERY DRAN MALE TO PARTICIPATE IN A DEMON HUNT WHEN HE REACHES THE AGE OF MATURITY.

I WAS LEADING ONE SUCH EXPEDITION WHEN OUR SHAMAN DETECTED A PORTAL FORMING IN THE WATERS IN THIS AREA.

*We came with three small ships, and expected only several fiends to show themselves. When we arrived there were dozens. When you arrived the battle was over.*

*Demons will never willingly cooperate with one another unless a higher power forces them. Something sinister is going on here.*

YOU ARE ALL FORTUNATE TO HAVE SURVIVED YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH THEM. YOU MUST HAVE SKILLED WARRIORS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

THE DEMONS WERE DEFEATED *SINGLE-HANDEDLY* BY A SMALL BOY ACTUALLY.

--A BOY YOU SAY? FASCINATING, I WOULD LIKE TO MEET HIM.

WELL I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN, BECAUSE HE CERTAINLY WON'T WANT TO MEET YOU. YOUR KIND *MURDERED* HIS PARENTS IN COLD BLOOD.
WHILE IT'S POSSIBLE THAT DRAN MAY HAVE KILLED YOUR COMPANION'S PARENTS, I ASSURE YOU MAGE, *MY* TRIBE WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN SUCH SLAUGHTER.
A *TRUE* DRAN WARRIOR WOULD MUCH RATHER KILL SOMEONE THAT WRONGLY ACCUSED HIM OF AN EVIL DEED THAN KILL AN INNOCENT.
THAT'S ENOUGH. WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU G'DAR.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO TURN BACK SO WE'LL LEAVE YOU AT THE NEAREST TOWN OR OUTPOST WHEN WE MAKE LANDING.
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I WOULD LIKE TO REMAIN WITH YOU. I HAVE A DEBT TO REPAY, NOT ONLY TO YOU, BUT TO MY BROTHER.

VERY WELL G'DAR. WE MANAGED TO SAVE SOME OF THE ARMOR AND WEAPONS FROM YOUR SHIP. YOU MAY DO WHATEVER YOU WISH WITH WHAT WE HAVE RECOVERED.
YOU *CAN'T* BE SERIOUS!?! ELESSA HOW CAN Y-
MARISANA IS THE CAPTAIN OF THIS SHIP DELEZAR. SHE HAS AUTHORITY.
IT SEEMS I AM INDEBTED TO YOU ALL YET AGAIN.
COME, I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE LOWER GALLEY. YOUR WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES ARE THERE...
BESIDES, I HAPPEN TO AGREE WITH HER *COMPLETELY* ON THIS ISSUE. WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO PASS UP *ANYONE'S* HELP.
THIS IS ALL I REQUIRE. YOU MAY DO WHAT YOU WISH WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.

IS THERE ANY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS YOU WISH TO BE MADE FOR YOUR FALLEN COMRADES?
THEY DIED GLORIOUS DEATHS IN BATTLE. THEIR SPIRITS ARE WITH CHODAN NOW. DO WHAT YOU WILL WITH THE BODIES
EXCUSE ME CAPTAIN, BUT YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED ON DECK.
Moment
WHAT'S GOING ON ELENE?
THERE'S A SMALL TOWN OVER THERE. PROBABLY A TEMPORARY MINING COLONY OF SOME KIND.

THE DEMONS THAT ESCAPED WERE SPOTTED FLYING IN THAT GENERAL DIRECTION.

IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO MAKE LANDFALL THERE AND ASK SOME QUESTIONS.

VERY WELL. MOVE THE SHIP IN AS FAR AS YOU CAN AND DROP THE ANCHOR.

YES CAPTAIN.

IS ZEPH WELL ENOUGH TO TRAVEL DELEZAR? YOU WILL CONSIDER THAT WE ARE MOVING EVEN CLOSER TO A WAR, WHICH IS NO PLACE FOR A CHILD.

ZEPH WILL BE ALRIGHT. I'LL NOT LEAVE HIM IN THE CARE OF OTHERS

I'VE BEEN WATCHING OVER THAT BOY FOR ALMOST FOUR YEARS NOW

*I only hope the inhabitants of that village can give us some clue as to what's going on*

TO BE CONTINUED

The Preview of

# WARLANDS

## The Legacy of Shidima

**Roger:** Welcome to the very first preview from Dreamwave Productions entitled "Warlands: The Legacy of Shidima". Here is a clip from an interview of the creative team which includes Warlands creators Pat Lee and Adrian Tsang and exciting new talent Armakin.

**Roger:** Is Shidima a samurai ninja kind of book and does it take place in Japan?

**Adrian:** Since Shidima is closely linked with Warlands, it can't take place in Japan with samurais and ninjas. What readers will notice though, is that the world of Shidima [illegible] Japan, and shares many similar cultural aspects and social constructs.

**Roger:** How is Shidima tied in with the regular series of Warlands?

**Adrian:** Shidima is situated within the world of Warlands, and takes place several hundred years before the events depicted in Warlands Volume #1, and several decades before the First War of the Races which constitutes much of the events that will be dealt with in Volume #3. That's all I'm willing to say for now. We really don't want to give too much of the plot away.

**Roger:** Being a new penciler on this title, Pat must have a lot of faith in you to take up a Warlands book. What are your influences and what kind of style are you aiming for?

**Armakin:** My influences are Bengus, Hiroaki Samura and Joe Madureira. I would like to capture the same mood and fluidity that Hiroaki presents in Blade of the Immortal while at the same time keeping vibrant colors like Warlands the regular series.

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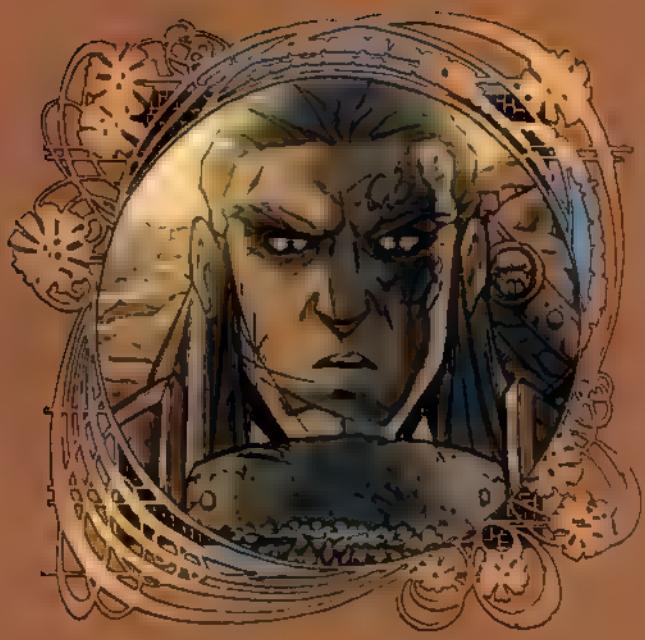

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# WARLANDS™

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YOUR REPORT GENERAL.
OUR PREPARATIONS ARE NEARLY COMPLETE SIRE. WE'VE CREATED MIXED UNITS OF OUR OWN KNIGHTS AND GHERYN'S CLANNERS, AND STATIONED THE VANTISH CAVALRY BATTALIONS ON OUR FLANKS TO ACT AS HIT AND RUN UNITS.
YOU'RE NOT CONCERNED YOUR TACTICS MAY BE A BIT *TOO* BASIC?
IT'S A GOOD PLAN ASSIVAR. WE'RE DEALING WITH ARMIES ON BOTH SIDES THAT ARE **BIGGER** THAN ANY OF US ARE USED TO DEALING WITH. THE MORE COMPLEX THE DEPLOYMENT, THE ***EASIER*** IT WILL BE FOR IT TO GO TO PIECES ONCE THE FIGHTING STARTS.
THOUGH I STILL THINK IT WOULD BE BEST TO STAY *WITHIN* THE WALLS OF SONODARA.
WITH THE SHEER NUMBERS OF OUR ENEMY, THE LAST THING WE WANT IS A SIEGE. WE NEED TO STAY MOBILE, AND WEAR THEM DOWN. BESIDES, IF WE HAD STAYED IN THE CAPITAL, WE'D HAVE *NOWHERE* TO REGROUP.
POINT TAKEN.

MY PATROL IS RETURNING.
JUDGING BY THEIR *SPEED* I SUSPECT THAT THEY'VE MADE CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY...
REPORT.
WE'VE MADE CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY JUST OVER THE THIRD RIDGE.
THEY'RE NOT COMING ONTO THE PLAINS TO MEET US THOUGH, THEY'RE FORCES ARE HEADING **RIGHT** DOWN INTO THE RAVINES OF THE LOWER VALLEY.
NOT COMING TO *MEET* US? A RUSE PERHAPS?
I DON'T BELIEVE SO YOUR MAJESTY. THEIR SUPPLY WAGONS ARE IN CLEAR SIGHT, AND ONLY LIGHTLY PROTECTED. THEIR FASTER UNITS ARE ALL *OUTRUNNING* THE SLOWER ONES, SO THEY'RE STRETCHED OUT ALL ACROSS THE PLAINS.
THEN THEY'RE VULNERABLE. IT SEEMS THEY *DON'T* SEE US AS MUCH OF A THREAT.
THEN THAT'S AN OVERSIGHT WE'RE GOING TO **MAKE** THEM REGRET.
AGREED.

We've only been out at sea a week, but already the strain is showing heavily on the crew. Fortunately
YOUR ORDERS CAPTAIN?
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS PLACE. DROP ANCHOR OUT HERE IN THE HARBOR. WE'LL TAKE THE ROWBOATS.
YES CAPTAIN.
I'LL GO DOWN BELOW AND GATHER OUR SUPPLIES.
* See Warlands Issue #5 for details.

-EH!
OOF!
STAY THERE!

WHAT IN DIN'S NAME ARE THE TWO OF YOU DOING?
I WAS JUST ASKING G'DAR IF HE KNEW OF A METHOD TO BANISH THE DEMON WE CAPTURED DURING THE ATTACK*, THOUGH IT SEEMS HE HAS A *BETTER* IDEA.
IMP'S SUCH AS THESE OFTEN SERVE AS MESSENGERS FOR LARGER DEMONS OR EFREETS. IT MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE US WITH *VALUABLE* INFORMATION.
I HAVE MERELY ENSURED THAT IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE.
GAAHK! YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS HUMAN!!!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO BE, WE'VE REACHED THE COAST AND WE'RE GOING TO BE HEADING OVERLAND SOON.
JUST FINISHED.
AAAAAAAH!
SSSSSSSS!

KEEP THAT DEMON QUIET G'DAR, NEUTRAL ZED OR NOT, I'LL NOT HAVE IT *GIVING AWAY* OUR POSITION.

I WILL HANDLE IT.

QUIET. WE'RE NEARING THE SHORELINE.

SWEET LOVING MOTHER!

I TAKE IT THE DEMONS THAT ESCAPED US *PASSED* THROUGH THIS VILLAGE?

IT WOULD SEEM SO.

STAY CLOSE TO ME ZEPH.

WE SHOULD EXTINGUISH THE LANTERNS THERE MAY YET BE ENEMES ABOUT, AND I'D RATHER NOT ANNOUNCE OUR ARRIVAL.

AGREED.

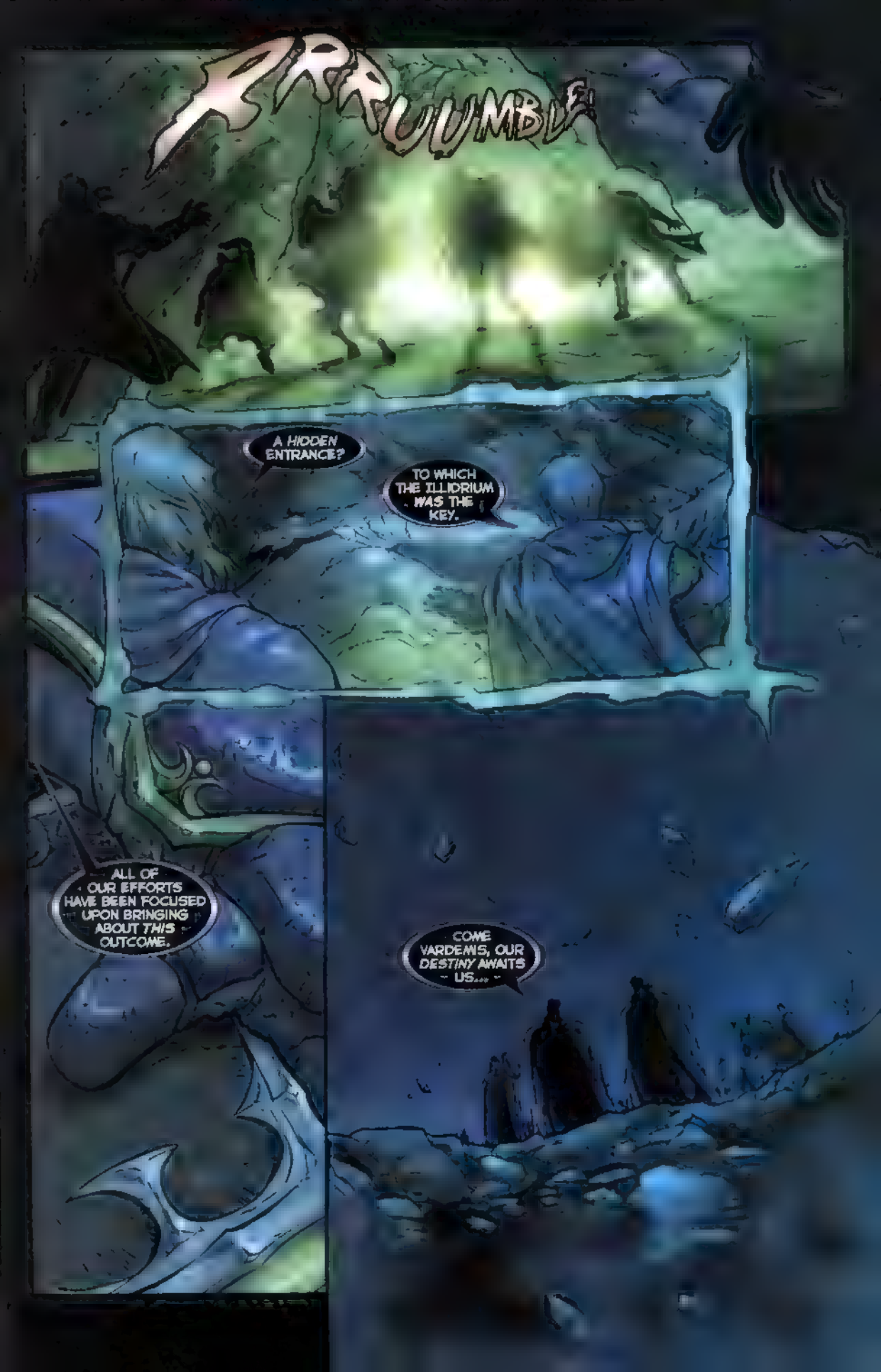
APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN QUITE A BATTLE.
MORE LIKE A SLAUGHTER...
LET'S MAKE OUR WAY OVER TOWARDS THE RIDGE AND GET A LOOK AT THINGS. THERE'S *NOTHING* WE CAN DO FOR THESE PEOPLE RIGHT NOW.
MY GOD

THERE MUST BE *HUNDREDS* OF THEM...
WHAT ARE THEY???
THEY'RE EGGS.
EGGS FOR WHAT???
*DEMONS.*
MUHAHA! NOW YOUR FATES ARE SEALED MORTALS! ONCE THE EGGS REACH MATURATION OUR ARMY WILL HATCH AND THE DARKLYTE ARMOR WILL BE OURS!!!
THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT THESE 'EGGS' *DON'T* HATCH.
NO.
NO???

WHY ON EARTH NOT?
WE KNOW THAT THE DEMONS ARE HERE TO OBTAIN A WEAPON KNOWN AS THE 'DARKLYTE ARMOR.' WHATEVER IT IS, THIS ARMOR IS THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THEIR INVASION.
SO IN TURN, OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO PREVENT THEM FROM ACHIEVING THAT GOAL. FOR A DEMON WANTS NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE FREE FROM THE BONDS OF ITS PRISON, AND WREAK HAVOC IN THE MATERIAL PLANE.
HAH! YOU'LL NEVER DISCOVER ARMOR'S LOCATION! YOU'LL NOT STAY US FROM OUR GOAL THIS TIME MORTAL!
THEN IT'S SETTLED. WE BEGIN OUR SEARCH FOR THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR'
-BUT THERE MUST BE THOUSANDS OF CAVES AND CHASMS IN THIS AREA. WHERE DO WE BEGIN OUR SEARCH?
THERE.
AH, BUT YOU ALREADY HAVE. YOUR ARMY COULD HAVE CHOSEN TO LAY IT'S EGGS ANYWHERE, YET YOU CHOSE THIS PARTICULAR SPOT. THAT'S PROOF ENOUGH THAT THE ARMOR IS SOMEWHERE NEARBY I THINK.

IT SEEMS THAT FATE HAS ALREADY MADE OUR DECISION FOR US. NOT TOO MANY THINGS IN THIS WORLD PRODUCE BLUE LIGHT AND OF THOSE VERY FEW PRODUCE IT NATURALLY.
ANYONE HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS?
THE IDEA IS SOUND AND THAT LIGHT DOES SEEM TO WARRANT SOME INVESTIGATION.
ALRIGHT. LET'S MOVE. STAY CLOSE TOGETHER AND WATCH WHERE YOU STEP.
THE LAST THING WE NEED IS A LEAGUE'S WORTH OF DEMONS BETWEEN US AND THE FOOTHILLS...
THAT WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL. ALREADY I FEEL THE ILLIDRIUM GUIDING ME TOWARDS THE ARMOR. WHEN THE ARMOR IS MINE THEN ASTAROTH'S DEMONS CAN BE THE FIRST TO TASTE ITS POWER.
???
IT SEEMS THAT WE MAY HAVE OVERESTIMATED THE VALUE OF THAT BOOK. IF THE ARMOR IS INDEED IN THIS PLACE, IT IS OF LITTLE USE TO US IF IT'S FORMER OWNER LEFT IT LYING BENEATH A MOUNTAIN.
WE SHOULD MAKE HASTE MY PRINCE. IT SEEMS THAT ONE OF THE DEMON LORDS HAS DISCOVERED OUR PLAN. THESE SPORES HAVE NEARLY REACHED MATURATION. IT MAY BE LITTLE MORE THAN ONE MOON BEFORE THEY HATCH.
NO. I WILL NOT BE DENIED MY PRIZE. THE ARMOR MUST BE HERE!

HRRRP
FFLPPP!
WHAT IS HAPPENING MY PRINCE???
RRRUMBLE
IT'S HAPPENING VARDEMIS! THE LOCATION OF THE ARMOR IS BEING REVEALED TO US!


RRRUUMBLE!
A HIDDEN ENTRANCE?
TO WHICH THE ILLIDRIUM WAS THE KEY.
ALL OF OUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FOCUSED UPON BRINGING ABOUT THIS OUTCOME.
COME VARDEAMS, OUR DESTINY AWAITS US...

THAT'S THE SIGNAL.

FWUP!

???

DEATH TO MALAGEN! DEATH TO THE DATARAN HORDE!!!!
GLLLGG!
KRAK!
THUD!

ATTACK!!!!
AAAAAAAAH!!!
SQUELCH!

NICE LITTLE FIGHT.
INDEED. OUR AMBUSH SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED.
DON'T START CELEBRATING JUST YET. THE REAL BATTLE WON'T START UNTIL THE DATARANS HAVE A CHANCE TO REGROUP AND COME AFTER US. THE PURPOSE OF THIS BATTLE IS JUST TO BLOODY THEIR NOSES.
ENTHUSIASTIC LITTLE FELLOW ISN'T HE?
INDEED.
SPEAKING OF BATTLE, YOU GENTLEMEN WILL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, I'LL BE NEEDING TO DULL MY AXE TONIGHT IF I WANT TO SHARPEN IT TOMORROW.
Meanwhile, at the [illegible] guard... Dataran army...

MALAGEN, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK. A LARGE BAND OF HUMANS AND DWARVES HAS ATTACKED THE SUPPLY WAGONS. WE NEED REINFORCEMENTS IF WE ARE TO SAVE ANY OF THE SIEGE ENGINES AND PROVIS...

SNIFF SNIFF

IT SEEMS WE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME.

ZZZPPT!

WOULD IT PERHAPS NOT BE WISE MY KAHN, TO TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE HUMAN ARMY CURRENTLY LAYING WASTE TO OUR REAR BEFORE CONTINUING?

OUR MIGHTY KAHN WOULD SACRIFICE THE WHOLE OF DATARA ITSELF IF IT MEANT COMING INTO POSESSION OF HIS TOYS AND TRINKETS.

WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OUR TASK MY KAHN.

THE RYOTIANS WILL GIVE NO AID TO THE HUMANS. NASIRA AND I GAVE THEM ...

... MORE PRESSING MATTERS TO ATTEND TO.

VERY WELL. BOTH OF YOU MAY RESUME COMMAND OF YOUR FORCES. YOU ARE JUST IN TIME TO BEAR WITNESS TO MY VICTORY.

THE DARKLYTE ARMOR IS WITHIN OUR GRASP.

--SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE FANATIC--

--SUCH IS THE WAY OF.... GLLLLLGGG

GLLLGLG...
SPEAK AGAIN, AND DIE WHERE YOU SIT. - SHROGRAN, DEAL WITH THE HUMANS.
YES, MY KAHN.
* GASP *
ACCOMPANY SHROGRAN. - AND KNOW THAT I AM MOST DISPLEASED WITH YOU, KORZETH. YOUR BEHAVIOR IS MOST UNBEFITTING OF A DATARAN LORD. SHROGRAN WILL BE IN COMMAND OF YOUR FORCES.
- COME. I WILL WASTE NO MORE TIME WITH THESE MORTALS. MY DESTINY AWAITS ME...
PAY HEED TO HIM, AND YOU MAY YET LEARN THE VALUE OF LOYALTY.

Meanwhile...

I FEEL IT VARDEMIS... THE DARKLYTE ARMOR IS HERE!!!

BE CAUTIOUS MY PRINCE. THIS IS ALTOGETHER TOO EASY.

BY THE DARK BLIGHT...

STAY HERE VARDEMIS.

IF THE DRAGON AWAKENS, SUMMON SHAYTAR TO DEAL WITH IT.

...I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO LARGE A WURM...

A FITTING GUARDIAN FOR SO COVETED A PRIZE.

SHIM'TAR MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO --

THAT IS YOUR CONCERN, NOT MINE.

WATCH I CAREFULLY VARDEMIS...

I AM ABOUT TO BRING A WORLD --

--TO ITS KNEES...

TO BE CONTINUED

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WARLANDS Vol. 1 Chapter #7 Fallen Comrades

# WARLANDS™

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Special Thanks
© Clinton Ing


## Last Issue

*Deep within a mountain somewhere inside the mountainpass known only as 'Dragon's Peace' Vampire lords Aalok and Vardemis stumble upon the chamber containing the Darklyte Armor with our heroes in hot pursuit. Aalok attempts to take possession of the armor, and is engulfed by a mysterious nimbus of power emanating directly from the armor itself. Meanwhile, the armies of the Eastern Kingdoms launch a pre-emptive attack against the Dataran horde.*


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ATTACK THE GUARDIAN AND KEEP IT OCCUPIED WHILE I SUMMON SHIMTAR! WE MUST GIVE THE PRINCE ENOUGH TIME TO WREST CONTROL OF THE ARMOR!
SHRRRAAAAAA!!!
ZMMMM!
SHKKK

CHNG!
TSSSS!
TSSSS!

FOOHMM!
SSHHKK!
KEEP THE WURM OCCUPIED UNTIL I HAVE COMPLETED MY SPELL!
COME CLOSER DRAGON. I WILL GIVE YOU A TASTE OF WHAT TRUE POWER IS.

HAS IT OCCURRED TO ANYONE THAT THERE MAY BE ACTUALLY *NOTHING* OF INTEREST IN THIS CAVE...

AND THAT IN FACT, THE ONLY THING WE ARE *GAINING* BY EXPLORING IT, IS INCREASING OUR CHANCES OF GETTING *HOPELESSLY* LOST?

ARE YOU *ALWAYS* SO OPTIMISTIC, MAGE?

THE ENTRANCE TO THIS CAVE WAS THE SOURCE OF THAT STRANGE LIGHT WE SAW ON THE UPPER RIDGE. IT SEEMED WORTH INVESTIGATING.*

THERE ARE TRACKS IN THESE CAVES AS WELL. SOMEONE HAS BEEN HERE VERY RECENTLY. AND IT DOESN'T APPEAR THAT THEY'VE COME BACK OUT, AT LEAST *NOT* BY THE SAME WAY WE CAME IN.

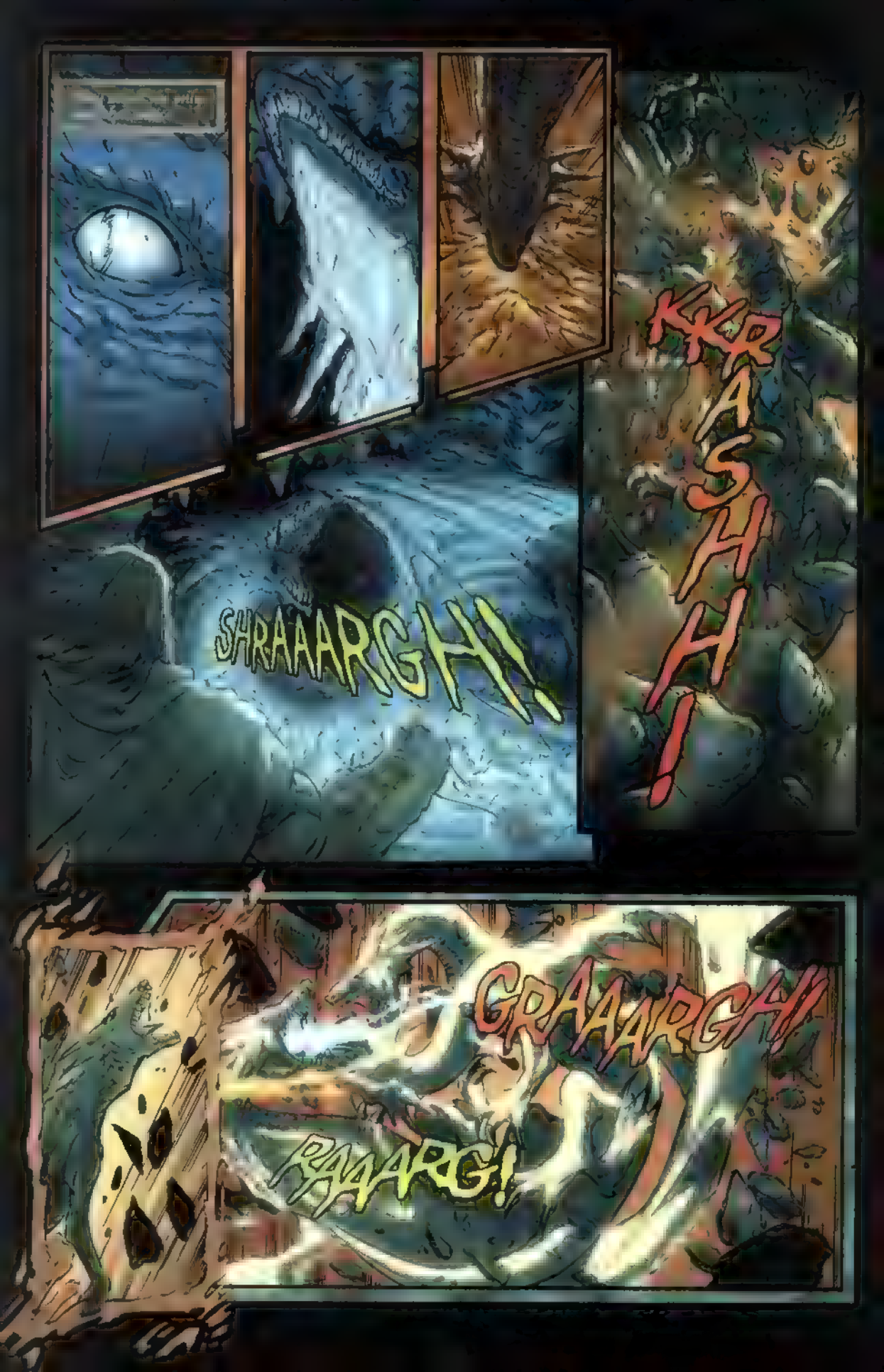
PERHAPS THEY'RE FUR TRAPPERS HUNTING A HIBERNATING BEAR?

THAT *DIDN'T* SOUND LIKE A BEAR TO ME...

COME ON! WHATEVER IT IS I THINK WE MAY HAVE *FOUND* WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR!

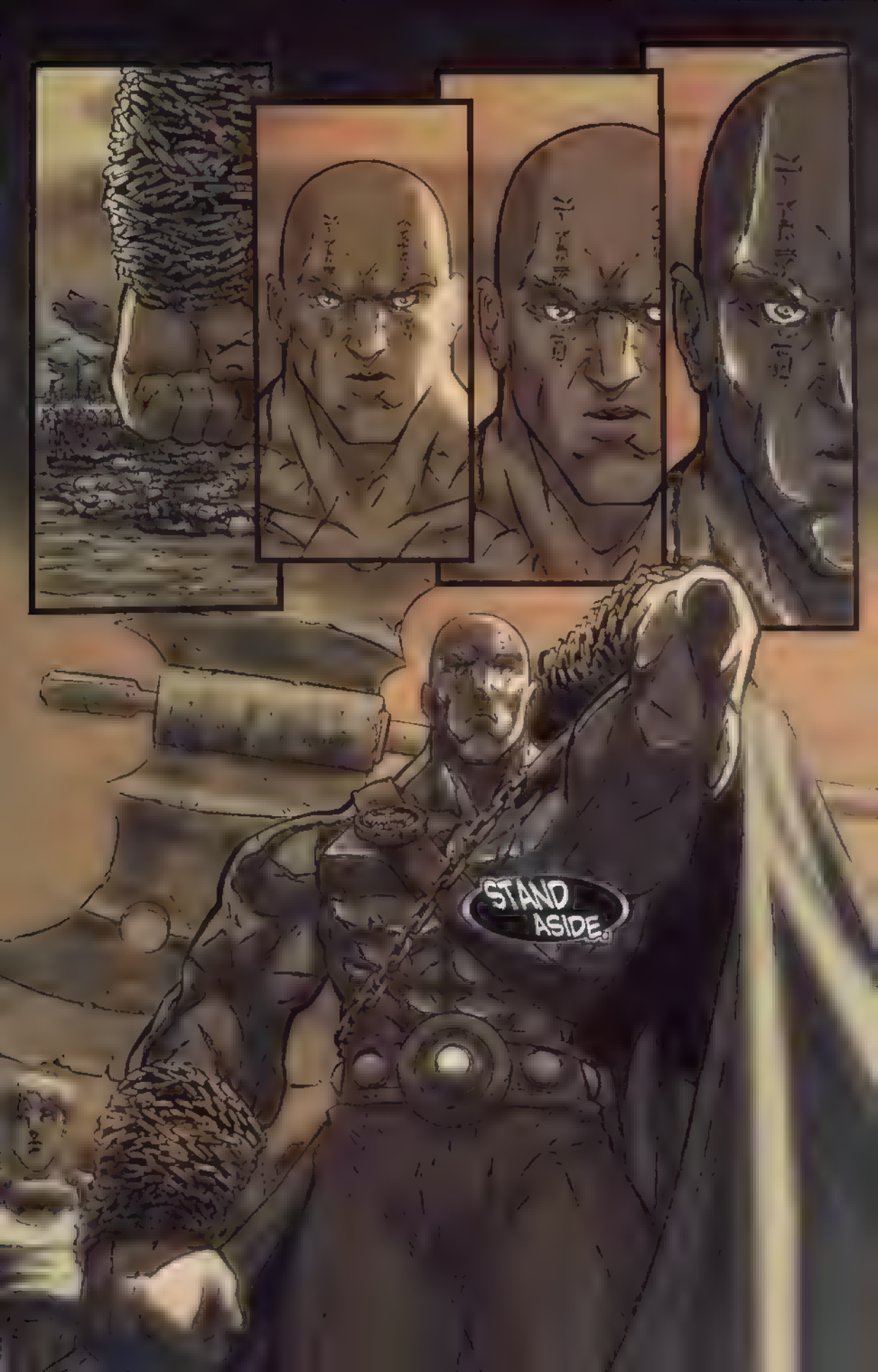
* see last issue for details.

SEND A RUNNER TO ASSIVAR'S CAVALRYMEN, TELL THEM WE NEED SUPPORT ON THE RIGHT FLANK OR WE'RE DONE FOR!
the battlefield, a powerful summoning spell is cast.
goes still as thousands take note of the huge wurm overhead.
CHODAN'S BEARD...
-EH?
HRRRAAAAAAA!!!!


SHRAAARGH!
KKR
ASHH!
GRAAARGH!
RAAARG!

LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU FARE NOW DRAGON...
-EH?
WHOOM
WHOOSH!
WHATEVER PLAN YOU ARE HATCHING IN THIS PLACE, IT ENDS NOW. SURRENDER, OR DEFEND YOURSELF.
WITH PLEASURE...
AHH

Meanwhile, unaware of the events
battle ready for
WHERE IN THE NAME OF DIN'S LIGHT D'D THOSE TWO DRAGONS COME FROM?
A MORE PRESSING CONCERN FOR US MIGHT BE WHY THE DATARANS HAVEN'T BEGUN THEIR ATTACK.
PERHAPS THEY'VE LOST THEIR NERVE, OR PERHAPS THEY'RE AS CURIOUS AS WE ARE ABOUT THOSE DRAGONS...
IF EITHER IS TRUE, THEN WE SHOULD BE ATTACKING THEM INSTEAD OF SITTING HERE THINKING ABOUT IT.
WAIT, SOMETHING IS HAPPENING...
Maybe they want to surrender
A nice thought, but definitely unlikely.


STAND ASIDE.

THWOMP!!

QUICKLY! GRAB HOLD OF SOMETHING!
LOOK OUT!

KLNG!
SKLURCH!
KLANG!

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS GOING ON OUT THERE.....?
?
IT'S THE METAL!!!!
IT'S PULLING ON THE METAL OF OUR WEAPONS AND ARMOR!
PULL OUR FORCES BACK NOW! NOW DAMN IT! RETREAT!!!!

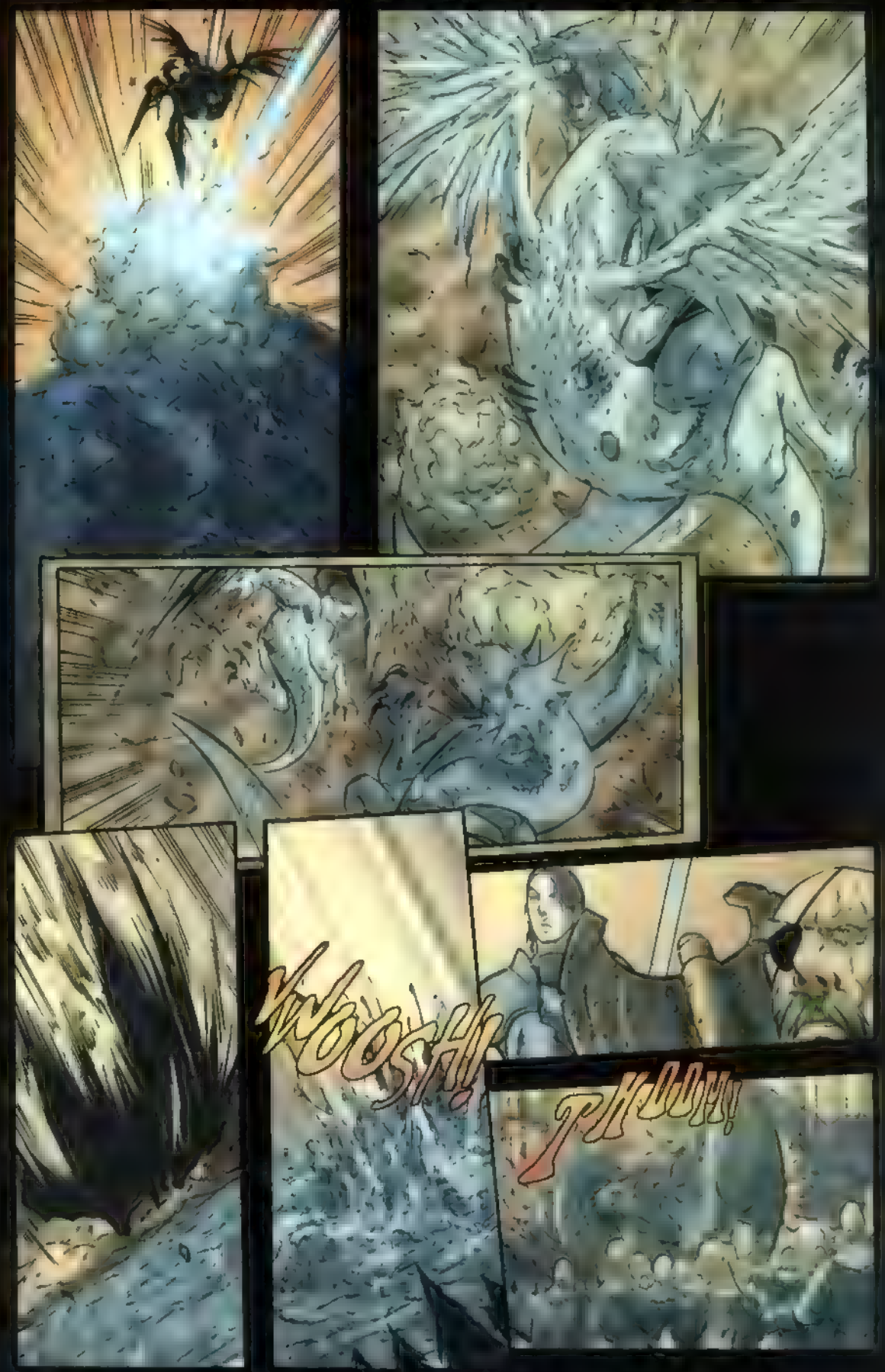
KEEP MOVING! I'LL HOLD THEM OFF, WHATEVER GOAL THEY HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH HERE WE CANNOT ALLOW THEM SUCCEED!
RIGHT!
TING
TING
TING
NO.. ELESSA, WAIT!
COME MEET YOUR DOOM WITCH.

NOT TODAY VAMPIRE.
KKKKK!
NOT FAST ENOUGH HUMAN.

KKRAK!
KLAK!
CRACK!
YOUR DEATH WILL BE EASY COMPARED TO THE ONE I WILL GIVE YOUR COMPANIONS.
CONSIDER YOURSELF FORTUNATE—
.....
GLLLL...
NOOOO!

YOU ARE BRAVE BOY. UNFORTUNATE THAT YOUR VIRTUE BUYS YOU ONLY A QUICK DEATH.
ZEPH! GET DOWN!
DELEZAR!
WHOOOM!
??
WHOOOM!

DELEZAR..?
....
WHAT SORCERY IS THIS???
STAND ASIDE.
VVVVVVV
STAY HERE. REVENGE WILL COME SOON YOUNG LAD.
WAIT! COME BACK!!!!


WOOSH!
THOOM!

DELEZAR!!!

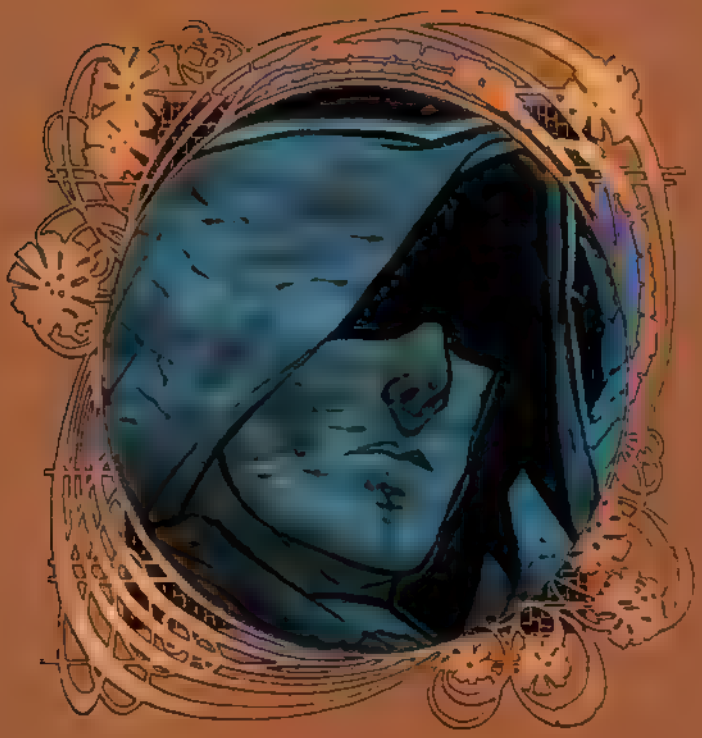
KRRRR!

GET OUT OF HERE! THE WHOLE PLACE IS COLLAPSING!

ELESSA, WE'RE COMING OVER!

FORGET ABOUT ME! JUST GO!!!

FOOOM!
ELESSA!!!
TO BE CONTINUED



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Special Thanks to: Clifton Ng, Jason Yee

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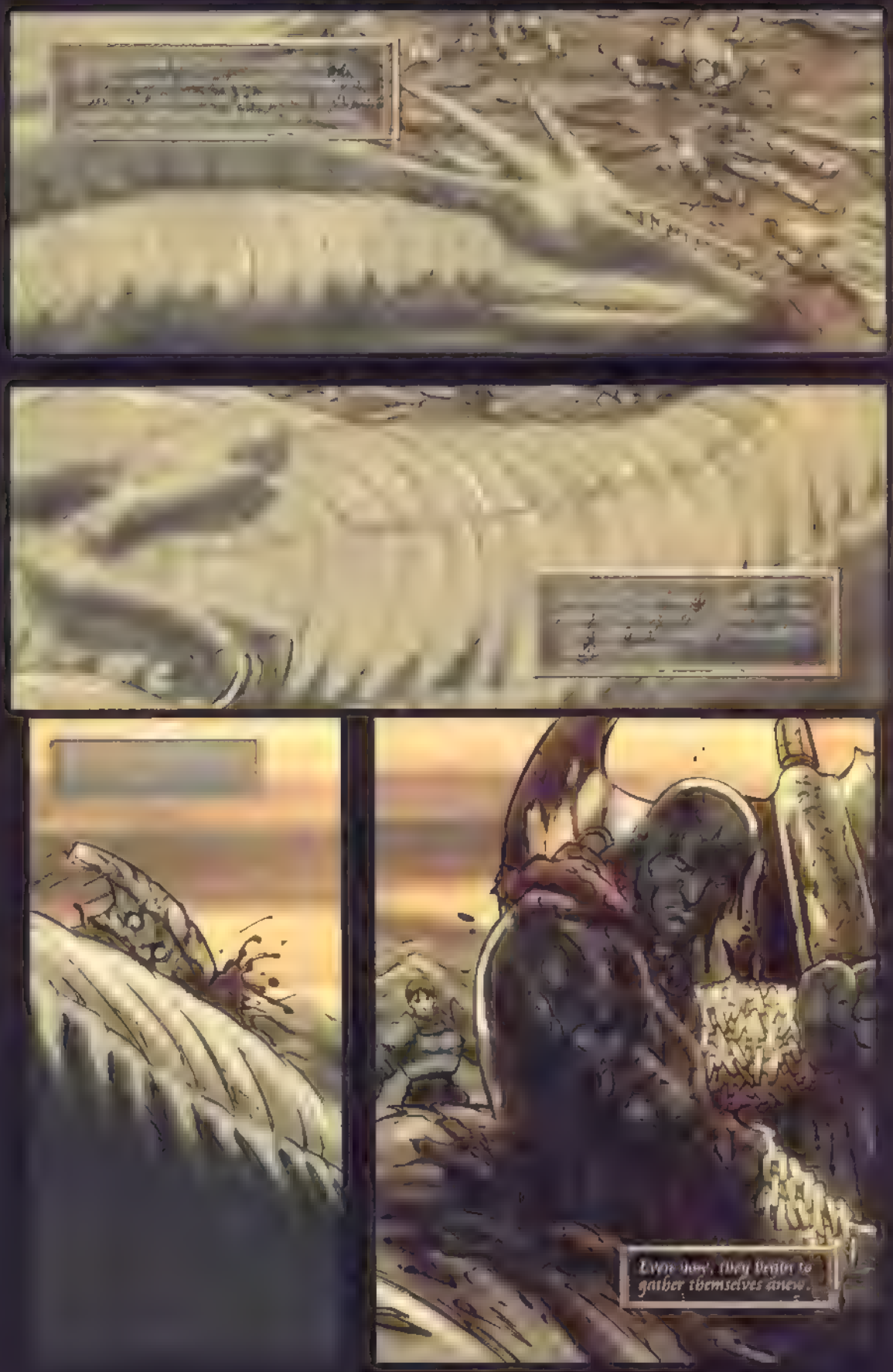
Even now, they begin to gather themselves anew.

The events that have just transpired, however, leave the would-be tyrant at a loss to describe his current state of mind as anything other than just th
IT APPEARS THAT THE GUARDIAN OF THE DARKLYTE ARMOR WAS A FAIR MATCH FOR SHIM'TAR. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES HOWEVER, I WOULD MARK THE BATTLE A LOSS AS OPPOSED TO A DRAW.
Malagen, however, has not watched the passing of several millennia without learning how to adapt.
EXPLAIN YOURSELF TESSAN.
OF COURSE MY KAHN - FIRSTLY, I BELIEVE THAT WAS OUR ONLY DRAGON.
AND UNDERNEATH IT LIES NEARLY HALF OF OUR FRONT LINE TROOPS. ADDITIONALLY, IT HAS HALTED THE BATTLE, WHICH WILL ALLOW OUR ENEMIES TO REGROUP.

*See Warlands Issue #7 for details

Inside
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE...THIS CAVE ISN'T GOING TO HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.
WE HAVE TO FIND ELESSA! SHE'S TRAPPED SOMEWHERE INSIDE!!!
Act quickly...I cannot hold back the rocks for long.
MARISANA! LISTEN TO ME! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
THERE'S DAYLIGHT COMING THROUGH THE REAL WALL, IF WE CAN DIG THROUGH WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE IT OUT OF HERE!
I NEED YOUR HELP TO DIG THROUGH IT MARISANA!

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR ELESSA RIGHT NOW! IF WE STAY HERE ANY LONGER NONE OF US ARE GOING TO MAKE IT OUT OF HERE ALIVE!
AL-ALRIGHT...
We can't let Elessa and Delezar's sacrifices be for nothing!
WHEREVER YOU ARE SISTER... WHATEVER HAS BECOME OF YOU -
KNOW THAT I WILL AVENGE YOU...I SWEAR IT.

...SWEET LOVING MOTHER...
AM I DEAD?

WHERE AM I?

MY LORD! THE LEFT FLANK IS COLLAPSING, THE DATARANS HAVE PENETRATED OUR LINE AND ARE MOVING TOWARDS THE THIRD RIDGE!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT MY KING?
KING..?
Then soldier... they're humans.
And they're calling me "King".
SIRE! THE QUEEN'S PAVILION IS DIRECTLY IN THE PATH OF THE DATARAN VANGUARD! IF WE DON'T REINFORCE THE...
Is this a dream?
No... not a dream... too real... and yet not quite real at all.

That must be the ridge that the soldier spoke of.
SHREPPP!
QUICKLY MY QUEEN! WE MUST GET YOU TO SAFETY!
That woman... the Queen he spoke of. But that's impossible.
She looks just like.
me.

AAAARGGGH!
Though somehow I know it
to me after a fashion
A part of me at least

* See Warlands Issue #0 for details.

carry me away...

goddess. Could it be that I have

HE HAS AWAKENED. YOU MAY BEGIN.

bond him into his service...

* See Warlands Issue #0 and #1/2 for details.

MY GOD...

ATRELEGIS? KING ATRELEGIS OF MYRIDORN?

THERE IS NO MORE KING ATRELEGIS. THERE IS ONLY AALOK. PRINCE AALOK OF DATARA, AND I AM HIS SHADE.

HAVE YOU COME TO HELP ME DIG? THERE ARE SO MANY BODIES TO BE BURIED HERE. SO MANY DEATHS ON MY SOUL
I TRY TO GIVE THEM WHAT PEACE I CAN.
OH...
YOU... YOU ALMOST LOOK LIKE SOMEONE I KNEW LONG AGO
SOMEONE I LOVED...
...ALMOST...

LISTEN TO ME!

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! *SOMEHOW*... SOMEHOW I'VE BEEN SHOWN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU ALL THOSE YEARS AGO! IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR A REASON...

I CAN'T LEAVE NOW...I HAVE SO MUCH WORK TO DO. SO MANY PEOPLE TO LAY TO REST...

THE ONES THAT **DID** THIS TO YOU...MALAGEN AND THE DATARANS...THEY'VE RETURNED! WE **HAVE** TO STOP THEM...

EVEN IF YOU STAY HERE, I'LL *NOT* SPEND ***ETERNITY*** AS AN UNDERTAKER. DO YOU KNOW OF A WAY TO GET OUT OF HERE?

THERE *ISN'T* ONE. I BELIEVE THAT'S PRETTY MUCH THE POINT WHEN ONE IS IN HELL.

I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE. IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN ANY ...LIFE. NOT SINCE I CAME HERE...

WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?

THEN YOU *MUST* COME WITH ME! THAT MAY BE OUR **ONLY** CHANCE! YOU CAN SPEND ETERNITY WINDOW DRESSING FOR THE DEAD, OR YOU CAN *COME* WITH ME.

...PLEASE I **NEED** YOUR HELP...TOGETHER WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE-

TOGETHER...

# WARLAND Sketches

By Pat Lee

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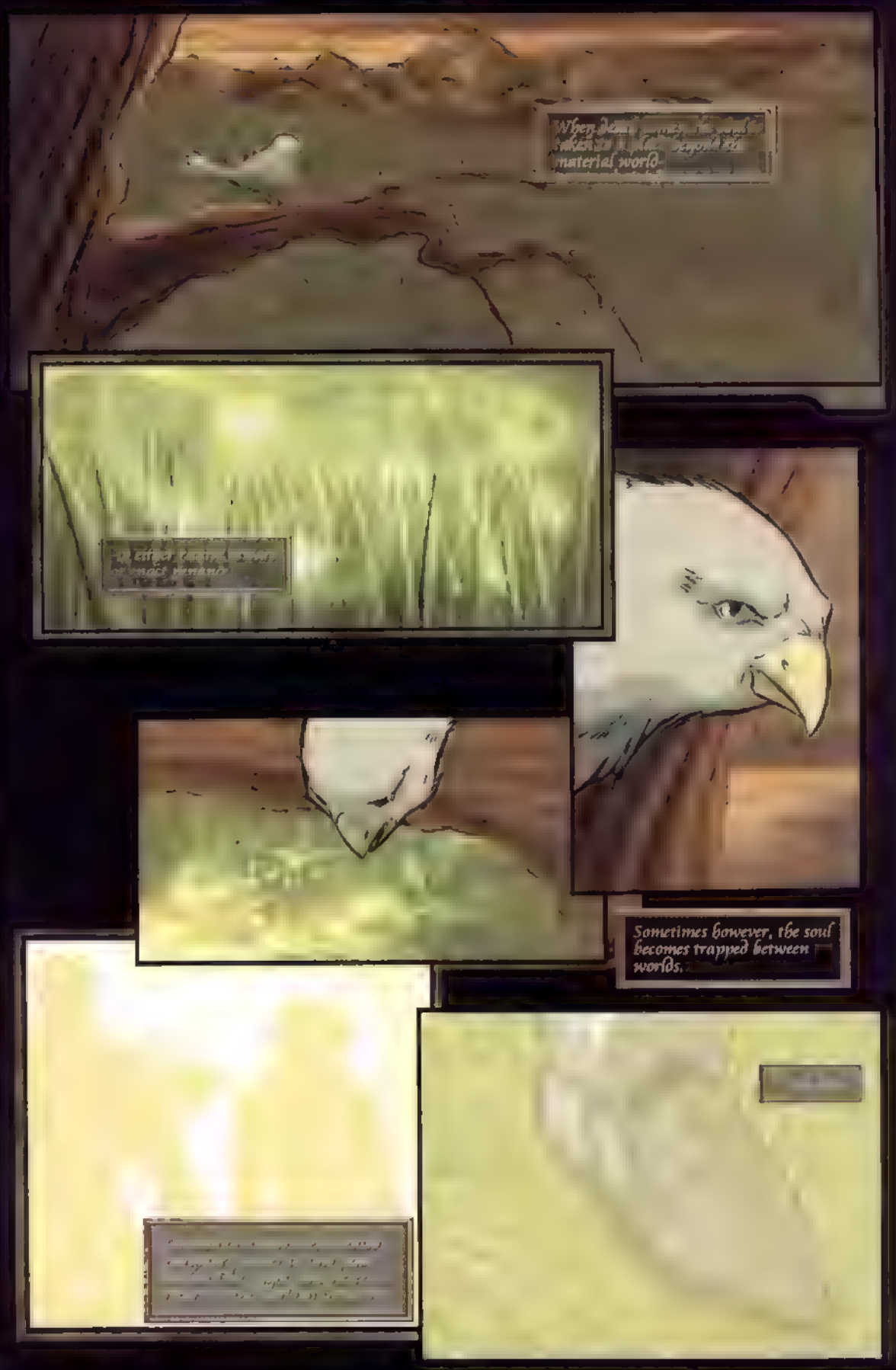
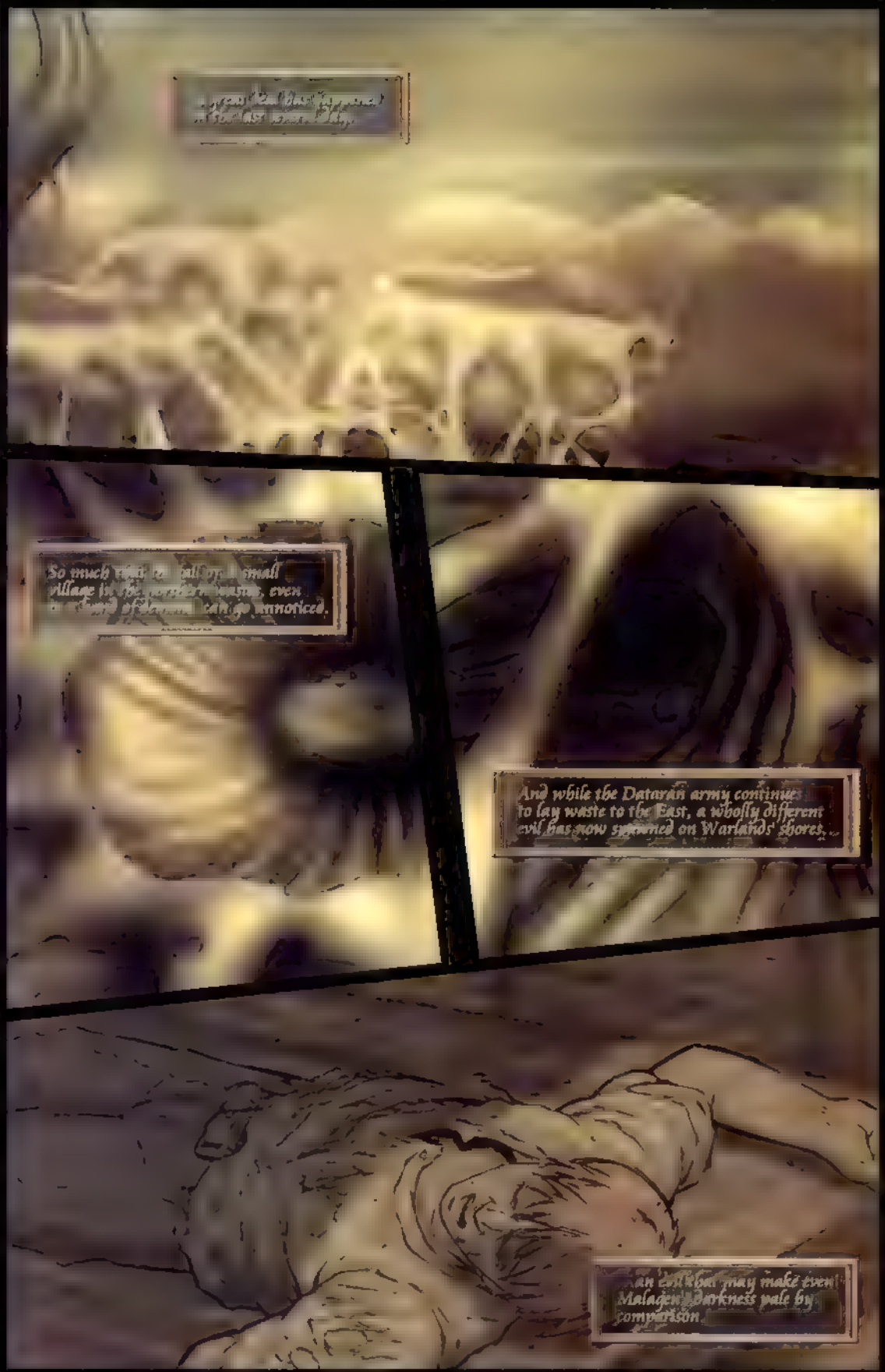
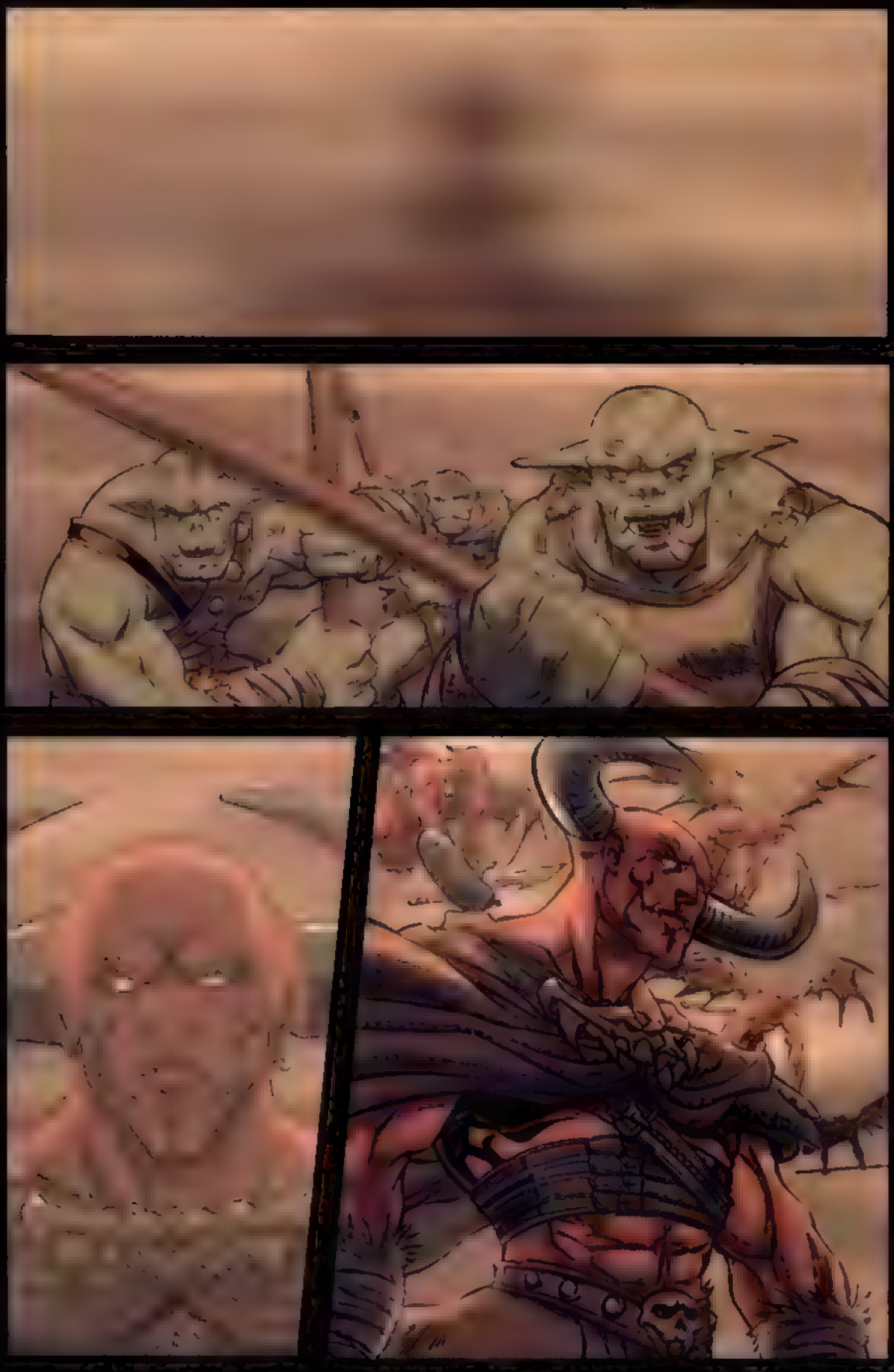

material world.
Sometimes however, the soul becomes trapped between worlds.

* See Warlands Issue #8 for details.

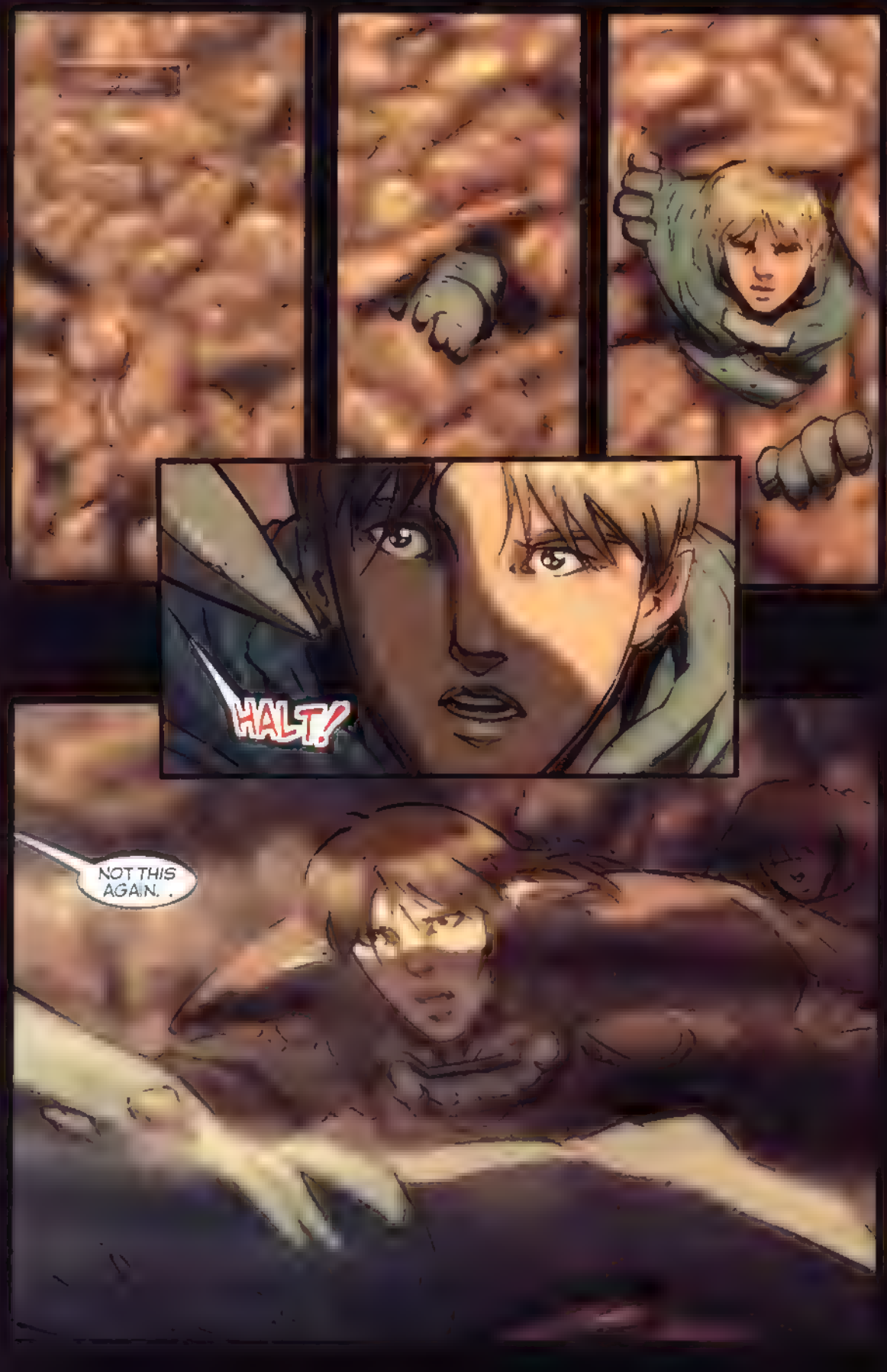
DON'T YOU SEE???
THE DATARANS MAKE WAR ON MYRIDORN AS WE SPEAK-YOU'VE BEEN *GIVEN* A SECOND CHANCE TO SET THINGS RIGHT, TO *LEAD* YOUR PEOPLE ONCE AGAIN! MALAGEN **LEADS** THEM!
MALAGEN.
YOU SAY MALAGEN *INVADES* MY HOMELAND.
SHING!
THEN THAT *IS* WHERE WE **SHALL** GO...


So much that the fall of a small village in the northern wastes, even in a land of demons, can go unnoticed.
And while the Dataran army continues to lay waste to the East, a wholly different evil has now spawned on Warlands' shores...
An evil that may make even Malagen's darkness pale by comparison.

SO HE'S FINALLY DECIDED TO SHOW HIMSELF.
DOUBLE THE PERIMETER GUARD, AND ROUSE MY FORCES. WE ARE ABOUT TO BE ATTACKED.



IT SEEMS ASTAROTH HAS MADE HIS MOVE. HE SEEKS TO WREST CONTROL OF THE DARKLYTE ARMOR FROM ME.
PERHAPS SOMEONE SHOULD INFORM HIM THAT WE DON'T HAVE IT.
SEND RUNNERS AND ORDER OUR FORCES PURSUING THE HUMANS TO FALL BACK. THESE DEMONS ARE NOW OUR PRIMARY CONCERN.
AS YOU COMMAND MY KAHN.


HALT!
NOT THIS AGAIN. .

* See Warlands Issue #3 for details.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME.
THE LITANA AND THE BESILN REPORTED BACK TO US SHORTLY AFTER YOU MADE LANDFALL HERE. THEIR CREW TOLD US WHAT WAS HAPPENING
WHERE IS ELESSA, I SHOULD SPEAK WITH HER, WE STILL HAVE MUCH PREPARATIONS TO MAKE.
SHE'S DEAD SHE DIED PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE, EVEN WHEN YOU WOULD NOT.
W-WHAT? ...HOW...SHE CAN'T...I NEVER TOLD HER...
WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, WE'LL MOURN HER APPROPRIATELY. FOR NOW, WE HAVE VERY PRESSING MATTERS TO ATTEND TO

WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE? TO SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES WHAT YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART TO BE TRUE?
I HAVE ALREADY SEEN MARISANA.
EVEN NOW, BEYOND THE PEAKS TO THE WEST OF US, AN ARMY OF DEMONS DOES BATTLE WITH THE DATARANS WHILE THE HUMANS AND DWARVES RETREAT BACK.
THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO REGROUP AND SOLIDIFY A DEFENSE.
WITH THE DATARANS FIGHTING THE DEMONS, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SLIP AROUND THEM AND JOIN UP WITH THE OTHERS
NO MARISANA.
THEN YOU'RE READY TO CONSIDER MAKING THE COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING WITH THE OTHER RACES?

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN... HOME...
I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL. I TOO RECENTLY RETURNED TO MY HOMELAND.
YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOUR HOME STILL EXISTS, YET SOMEHOW IT'S NO LONGER YOURS
THE EXPERIENCE WAS... DISCONCERTING.
TELL ME OF THE WORLD THESE LAST YEARS. I HAVE THREE CENTURIES TO CATCH UP ON.

WITH THE PROVINCE OF VANTYRE DECLARING IT'S OWN SOVEREIGN-
NO!
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW? -YOU MAY BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT SHORTLY AFTER YOUR..DEPARTURE-MYRIDORN SPLIT INTO TWO KINGDOMS,
TELL ME ABOUT WHAT COLOR THE LEAVES TURN IN AUTUMN. TELL ME ABOUT THE PLAINS OF MY HOME AND WHAT BLOOMS UPON THEM...
...I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT POLITICS OR WARS-
I WANT BACK WHAT WAS TAKEN FROM ME.
.....
I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE ALIVE. I WANT TO ERASE THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF MURDER AND SUFFERING FROM MY SOUL...

** In ancient Myridorn, it was forbidden by church law for citizens to marry a partner of another race.*

*** See Issue #8 for details*

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD *RETHINK* YOUR PLEA FOR MY AID. THE LAST TIME I PLAYED THE ROLE OF A LEADER, IT BROUGHT MY PEOPLE TO THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION--
IF YOU **BELIEVE** THIS, WHY DO YOU ACCOMPANY ME?

LOOK AT ME!
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, I HAVE POSSESSION OF THE DARKLYTE ARMOR! EVEN NOW, I CAN FEEL IT ABSORBING MAGICAL ENERGY FROM THE AIR AROUND ME...
THOUGH I WIELD IT I AM IN IT'S SERVITUDE IN NEARLY THE SAME WAY THAT I WAS TO MALAGEN! ANY CREATURE WITHIN SEVERAL LEAGUES SENSITIVE TO THE FLOW OF MAGIK WILL BE ABLE TO TRACK US.
MALAGEN WILL HUNT ME TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD, AS LONG AS I LIVE, AS LONG AS THIS ARMOR COMPELS MY ACTIONS
SO I ACCOMPANY YOU. NOT FOR THE WORLD. NOT FOR THE PEOPLE I ONCE LED. NOT FOR YOU.
I GO ONLY TO END MALAGEN'S MISERABLE EXISTENCE.
--AND IF I AM LUCKY, I WILL DIE IN THE ATTEMPT, AND FINALLY FIND SOME MEASURE OF PEACE.
IF IT'S ETERNITY YOU SEEK, YOU NEED NOT GO TO SUCH EXTREMES.

VARDEMIS.
I WAS CURIOUS WHY YOU CHOSE TO KEEP THE ELF ALIVE, SO I FOLLOWED YOU. I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD BETRAY US TO THE MORTALS. THE MAGIK OF THE ARMOR MUST BE POWERFUL INDEED FOR IT TO HAVE TURNED YOU TO THEIR CAUSE.
NO!
I'VE NO QUARREL WITH YOU VARDEMIS. STAND ASIDE.
HAH. YOU SHOW ME MERCY MY FORMER PRINCE? YOU DARE SHOW ME HUMANITY? THAT IS AN INSULT TO OUR KIND. WE ARE WARRIORS YOU AND I.
HUMAN OR VAMPIRE, YOU CAN NOT DENY ME IN THIS.

STAND BACK.

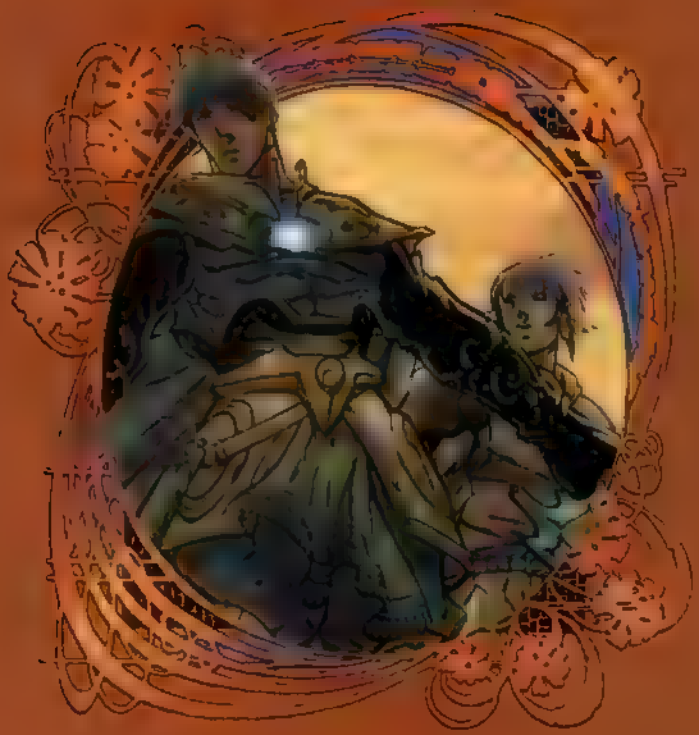
I GIVE YOU ONE LAST *CHANCE* VARDEMIS.

SHING!

SHRRRK!
To be continued

# WARLAND Sketches

By Pat Lee



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# WARLANDS

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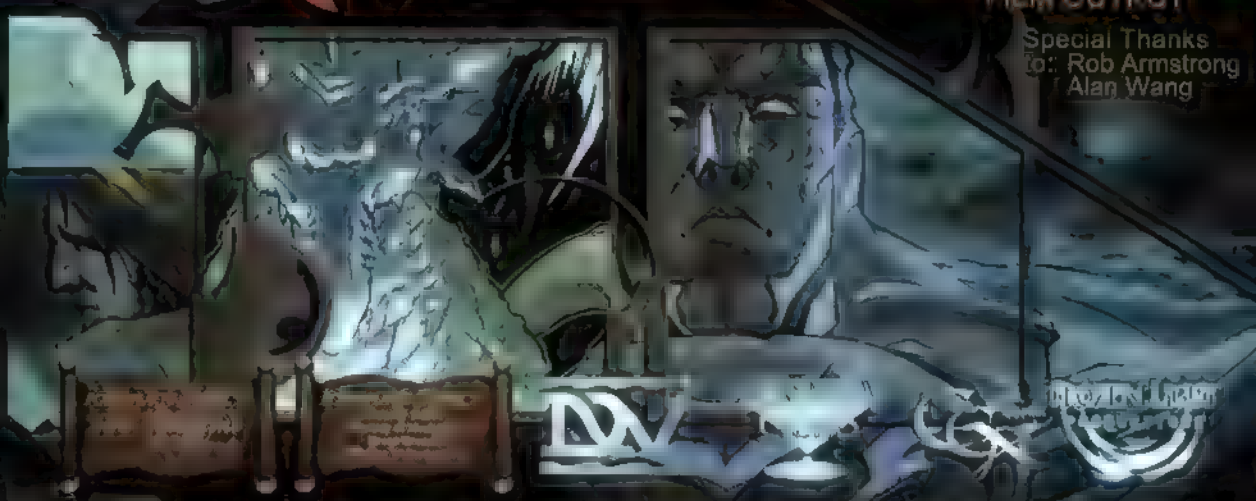

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KKRRK
KKRRK
KKRRK
WHOOSH!

THIS IS MADNESS VARDEMIS! IN THE NAME OF WHATEVER FRIENDSHIP MEN SUCH AS YOU AND I MAY HARBOR, STOP THIS NOW!
AND WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO MY PRINCE? RETURN TO DATARA A TRAITOR AT THE MERCY OF TARA'S JUDGEMENT? I THINK I WOULD RATHER FALL HERE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I WOULD SACRIFICE TO SEE ONCE AGAIN THE SPIRES OF MY HOME? DO YOU THINK I DO NOT LONG TO LIVE IN PEACE?
I WAS MADE LONG BEFORE YOU. IF THERE WAS A WAY TO GO BACK, A ROAD TO WALK, I WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT LONG AGO.
DO YOU THINK I NEVER DREAM OF MY LIFE AS A HUMAN?
OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SET OUT ON MY OWN AND FIND SOME TRINKET FROM THE TIME OF FAERIE SO THAT I MIGHT BAND TOGETHER WITH THE HUMANS?
AALOK OF DATARA: YOU ARE A VAMPIRE.
I AM A VAMPIRE, AND UNLIKE YOU, I HOLD NO ILLUSIONS AS TO WHAT I AM. MY NATURE IS EVIL. THAT IS THE EXISTENCE FATE HAS DEALT TO ME.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU OR I DO, MAKE NO MISTAKE...THERE IS NO GOING BACK. WE ARE DAMNED.
NO!!!
WHOOMP!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!
KLANG!
I WILL HAVE MY LIFE BACK!
KRRR RKK

I WILL TAKE BACK WHAT WAS STOLEN FROM ME!
WOOSH!!

ATRELEGIS!
.....
GRAB HOLD VARDEMIS, I CAN PULL YOU UP!
A PITY. YOU FIGHT WITH THE PASSION OF A TRUE LORD OF DATARA MY PRINCE.
IT IS AN HONOR TO FALL IN COMBAT TO YOU.
CHIK!
I'LL SEE YOU IN HELL, MY PRINCE.

VARDEMIS! LISTEN TO ME!
WOOMP!
SHING!
SHING!
SHING!

SCHING!
NO!

HE WAS YOUR FRIEND...
A FRIEND? I DON'T KNOW THAT MEN SUCH HE...MEN SUCH AS I CAN EVER BE FRIENDS...A COMRADE PERHAPS.
HE WAS LOYAL, AND TRUSTWORTHY IN HIS OWN FASHION. HE SHOULD NOT HAVE SAW HIS END BY MY HAND.
COME. THERE'S MUCH WORK TO BE DONE.

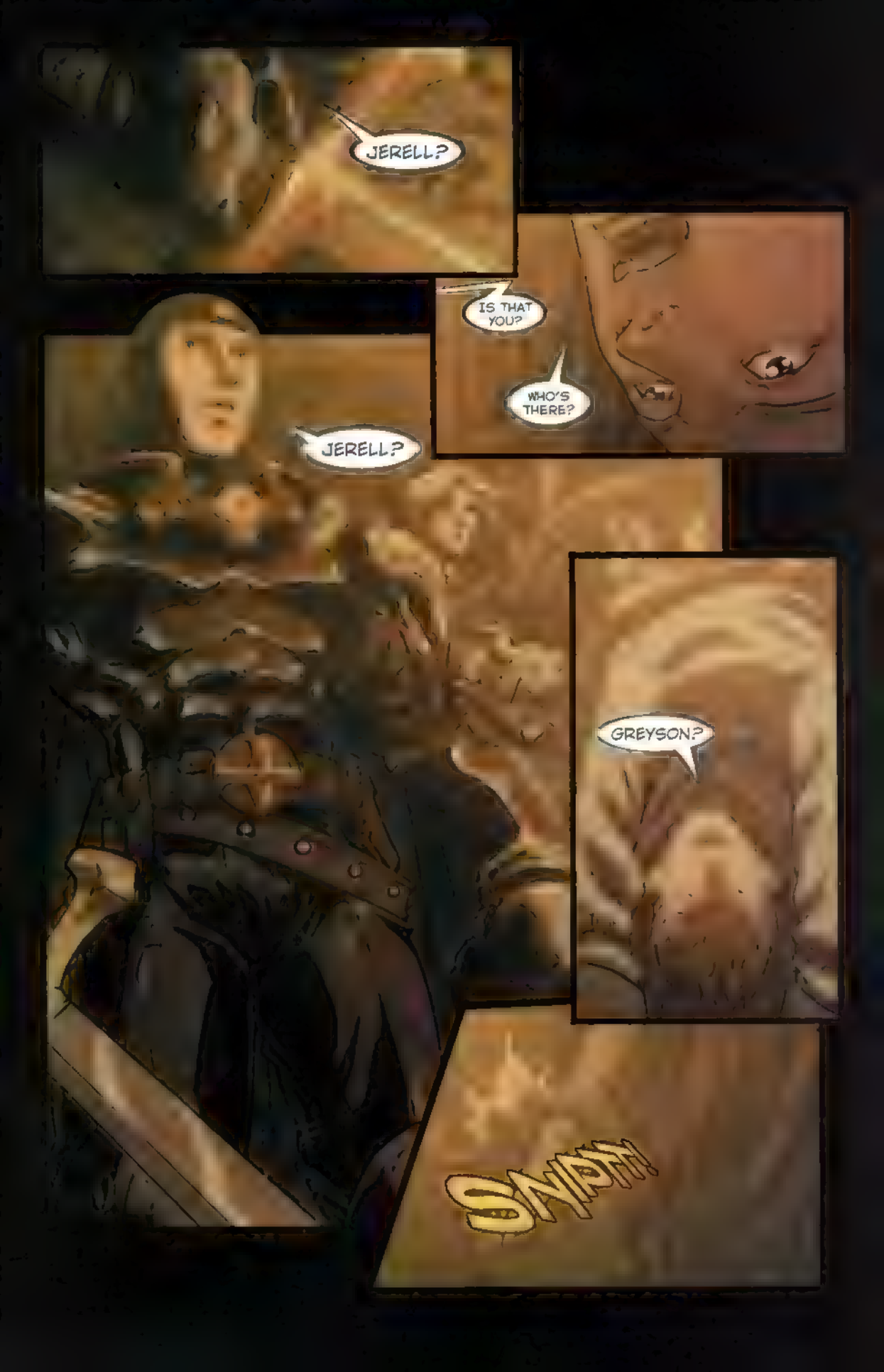
I DON'T SEE HOW WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUR ALLIES SNEAKING ABOUT IN THE DARK LIKE THIS...
-I KNOW THESE WOODS LIKE THE BACK OF MY OWN HAN...
FWIP!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED WE CAN'T RISK ALERTING THE DATARANS TO OUR PRESENCE.
SENDING OUT A SMALL SCOUTING PARTY TO MAKE CONTACT IS BETTER THAN TRYING TO MOVE OUR ENTIRE FORCE THROUGH UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF MARISANA- I GREW UP IN THE HIGHLANDS-
-AAAAAAAH!!!
JERELL!!!

AMBUSH!

OH SHI....

STAY CLOSE TO ME ZEPH!

WAIT!


JERELL?
IS THAT YOU?
WHO'S THERE?
JERELL?
GREYSON?
SNAP!

OOF!
G'DAR STOP!
SPEAK QUICKLY JERELL- ARE THESE MEN FRIEND OR FOE?

THESE ARE SOLDIERS FROM A MYR'SH PATROL, G'DAR, MY PEOPLE.
AND IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU, THAT MAN YOU HAVE AT SWORD POINT HAPPENS TO BE MY BROTHER-
MY APOLOGIES- I MEANT NO OFFENSE.
NONE TAKEN..
-BROTHER?
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN GREYSON-
BETTER FOR ME, I THINK- THE NEWS WAS THAT THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS AT SHAL'HAZAR- HOW IN DIN'S NAME DID YOU MANAGE TO ESCAPE?
CAPTAIN PENDAR GAVE HIS LIFE FOR MINE AND THOSE OF MY COMPANIONS.*
* SEE WARLANDS ISSUE #1 FOR DETAILS.

YOU SEEM TO HAVE FALLEN IN WITH SOME INTERESTING COMPANY JERELL.
I SUGGEST WE DISPENSE WITH INTRODUCTIONS FOR NOW. A SMALL BAND OF DEMONS PASSED THIS PART OF THE FOREST RECENTLY, THEY MAY STILL BE IN THE AREA.
AYE, WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO TRACK THEIR MOVEMENTS - COME, OUR MAIN CAMP IS NOT FAR FROM HERE, NO DOUBT GENERAL ALDUS WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS
Meanwhile the Dataran army and the legions of Astaroth, the Demon Lord, battle ceaselessly on the plains of Myridorn.
LORD ASTAROTH'S MINIONS ARE FARING BETTER THAN WE ANTICIPATED... I WONDER HOW THEY WILL REACT WHEN THEY REALIZE WE ARE NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE DARKLYTE ARMOR.

THEY WILL NOT SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT.
AS DO I, TESSAN. NEVER FORGET TH...
I FEEL AALOK'S PRESENCE... IT IS UNFOCUSED, BUT IT IS THERE - ALONG WITH AN EBBING OF ENERGY THAT CAN BE ONLY THE DARKLYTE ARMOR ITSELF...
...ORDER SHROGRAN BACK TO THE FRONT LINE IMMEDIATELY.
-MY LORD?

MARK WELL THIS MOMENT MY VAMPIRE LORDS, FOR IT IS THE PRELUDE TO MY TRIUMPH... WE SHALL SOON SEE WHERE MY SON'S LOYALTIES LIE...

*Several Hours Later...*

*You are to be commended Jerell. I never thought anyone could convince the Elves to join the war.*

NEWS OF MALAGEN'S QUEST FOR THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR' MAY ALSO BE EXTREMELY VALUABLE...

I DON'T SEE HOW GENERAL, TWO OF MY COMPANIONS HAVE ALREADY GIVEN THEIR *LIVES* TO PREVENT MALAGEN FROM OBTAINING IT. .

I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS... FOR ALL YOUR LOSSES. KNOW THAT YOUR FRIENDS DID NOT FALL IN VAIN.
THE FOE WE FACE OUT THERE ON THE PLAINS IS THE LARGEST AND MOST FEARSOME OF IT'S KIND TO EVER WALK THE FACE OF WARLANDS.

MILITARY MIGHT ALONE *CANNOT* DEFEAT IT.

WE KNOW NOW THAT WHATEVER THE PURPOSE, MALAGEN WANTS THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR'- HIS ENTIRE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN CENTERED AROUND ITS ACQUISITION.

THIS KNOWLEDGE IS POWER FOR WE MAY YET BE able TO PREDICT MALAGEN'S NEXT MOVE, AND ..

I WILL TELL YOU WHAT HIS *NEXT* MOVE IS...

MALAGEN WILL DO BATTLE WITH **ME**, AND DIE SCREAMING FOR HIS MAD GODDESS AS HE DIES ***GRIPPING*** THE HILT OF MY BLADE

WHO GOES THERE? STATE YOUR BUSINESS!

I AM KING ATRELEGIS OF MYRIDORN, AND I GO TO MAKE WAR ON MALAGEN THE BLACK AND HIS MISERABLE HOST. JOIN ME, OR GET OUT OF MY WAY.
TO BE CONTINUED

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Created by Pat Lee and Adrian Tsang

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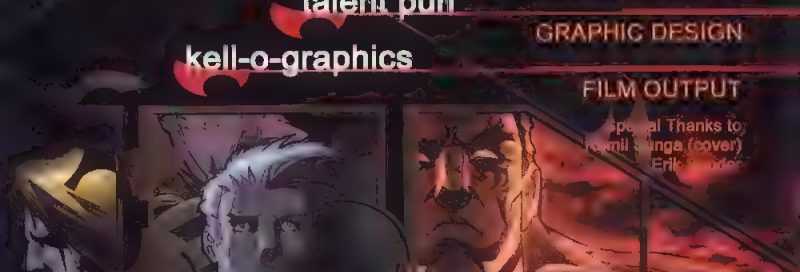

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SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT...
...IN REALITY, YOU WERE KIDNAPPED, BROUGHT BACK TO DATARA, TURNED INTO A VAMPIRE...AND SENT HERE TO ATTAIN THIS 'DARKLYTE ARMOR' IN ORDER TO CONQUER THE EAST.
YOUR NAME IS ATRELEGIS, THE SAME ATRELEGIS THAT WAS ONCE KING OF MYRIDORN... WHO BY ALL ACCOUNTS SAVE YOURS, DIED ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE AGAINST THE DATARANS IN THE FIRST WAR OF THE RACES OVER THREE CENTURIES AGO..
-EXCEPT THAT WITH THE AID OF PRINCESS ELESSA HERE, YOU'VE REDISCOVERED YOUR LOST IDENTITY, AND HAVE COME BACK TO LEAD US TO A GLORIOUS VICTORY.

DID I MISS ANYTHING?
I HAVE NEITHER THE DESIRE NOR THE INCLINATION TO TAKE COMMAND OF ANYONE'S FORCES.
I COME WITH ONE PURPOSE: TO KILL MALAGEN
YOU MAY ASSIST ME IN MY CAUSE, IF YOU SO DESIRE, OTHERWISE, IT WOULD BE IN YOUR BEST INTERESTS TO GET THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY.
...HE CERTAINLY TALKS LIKE A MYRISH KING
-AND CONSIDERING THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION, I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE WHAT KING ATRELEGIS HAS CHOSEN TO REVEAL TO US.
IF THIS IS IN ACTUALITY THE 'DARKLYTE ARMOR', AND HENCE, THE OBJECT OF MALAGEN'S DESIGNS, WE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN PRESENTED A VERY USEFUL STRATAGEM IN THIS WAR.

I DISAGREE. THE MAN BEFORE US MAY HAVE ONCE BEEN ATRELEGIS OF MYRIDORN-BUT FOR THE LAST THREE CENTURIES, HE HAS BEEN THE VAMPIRE LORD AALOK
PRUDENCE SUGGESTS WE CONSIDER THAT HIS LOYALTIES MAY YET STILL LIE WITH THE DATARANS. OR PERHAPS, EVEN THAT HE IS UNAWARE OF HIS ACTIONS--
AND THAT THIS IS ALL A SINISTER PLOT HATCHED BY MALAGEN TO INFILTRATE OUR RANKS-
IF WE ALLOW ATRELEGIS TO GO AFTER MALAGEN, WE RISK DELIVERING DIRECTLY INTO HIS HANDS THE VERY THING HE HAS INVADED OUR HOMES TO FIND.
MOREOVER, EVEN IF THIS IS ALL TRUE, WHO IS TO SAY THAT THIS DARKLYTE ARMOR IS EVEN POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DEFEAT MALAGEN?

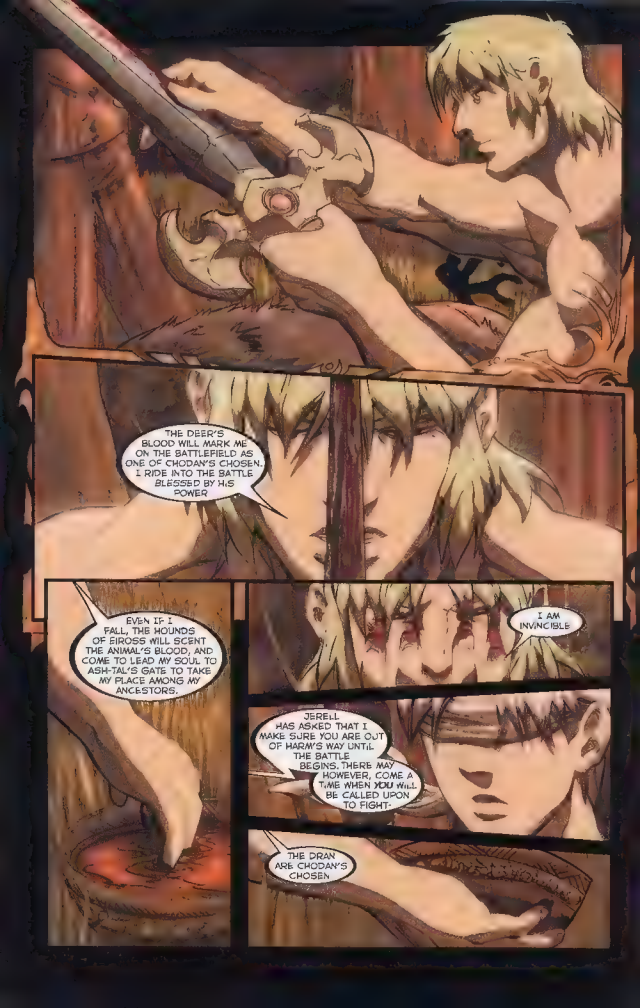
WHAT DO YOU THINK KING LORIEN?
I UNDERSTAND KING ASSIVAR'S MISGIVINGS. I, IN FACT, SHARE MANY OF THEM MYSELF.
THE DANGER THAT MALAGEN MAY COME AT US WITH THE FULL WEIGHT OF HIS FORCES, AND OUR ADVANTAGE OF BEING ABLE TO KEEP THAT INFORMATION FROM HIM IS TOO GREAT.
OUR PRIMARY ADVANTAGE IS THAT HE IS UNAWARE THAT YOU HAVE POSSESSION OF THE ARMOR.
I TOLD YOU ONCE, HELP, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY. YOU'VE CHOSEN NEITHER.
ATRELEGIS, NO!

DON'T DO THIS - WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THIS WAR BEGAN. WE HAVE A WINDOW FOR A VICTORY
YOUR REVENGE WILL MEAN NOTHING IF YOU SACRIFICE YOURSELF UNNESSARILY- PLEASE
...VERY WELL
WE'LL TRY IT YOUR WAY.
BUT FATE HAVE MERCY ON YOU ALL IF YOU'RE WRONG...
BEGIN THE PREPARATIONS

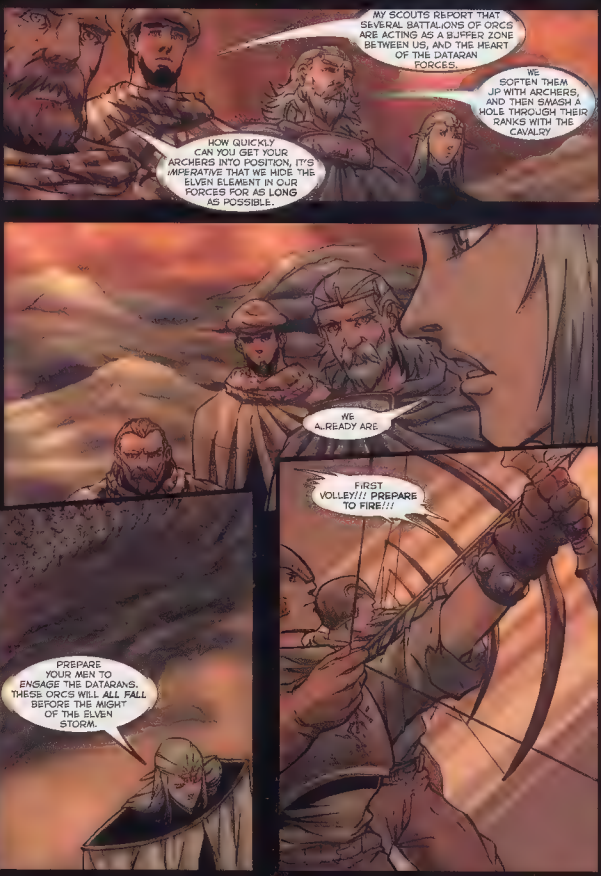
Meanwhile, our heroes have preparations of their own to make, before they go into battle.
I SUSPECTED AS MUCH.
IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE THE BATTLE BEGINS. I AM LEADING THE SKIRMISHERS IN THE FIRST WAVE.
I'VE BEEN PLACED INTO THE 107TH SWORD OF LIGHT, THEY TOOK HEAVY LOSSES IN THE OPENING DAYS OF BATTLE
I'LL PROBABLY WON'T SEE YOU AGAIN UNTIL THE BATTLE IS OVER
OR PERHAPS, NEVER AGAIN?
IS IT SELFISH OF ME, WITH THE SAFETY OF SO MANY AT STAKE, THAT I CAN FEAR ONLY FOR YOURS?

JERELL...

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Myrish camp.
"...AND MY ENEMIES SHALL FEAR ME, FOR MY SOUL IS YOUR W.I.L, AND MY SWORD IS YOUR WRATH..
WHAT ARE YOU DOING G'DAR?
AH IT'S YOU ZEPH. .
I AM ENACTING THE CEREMONY THAT EVERY DRAN ENDURES BEFORE GOING IN TO BATTLE.
*TRANSLATED FROM ANCIENT DRAH.


THE DEER'S BLOOD WILL MARK ME ON THE BATTLEFIELD AS ONE OF CHODAN'S CHOSEN. I RIDE INTO THE BATTLE BLESSED BY HIS POWER
EVEN IF I FALL, THE HOUNDS OF EIROSS WILL SCENT THE ANIMAL'S BLOOD, AND COME TO LEAD MY SOUL TO ASH-TAL'S GATE TO TAKE MY PLACE AMONG MY ANCESTORS.
I AM INVINCIBLE
JERELL HAS ASKED THAT I MAKE SURE YOU ARE OUT OF HARM'S WAY UNTIL THE BATTLE BEGINS. THERE MAY HOWEVER, COME A TIME WHEN YOU WILL BE CALLED UPON TO FIGHT.
THE DRAN ARE CHODAN'S CHOSEN

BUT HE WELCOMES ALL TRUE WARRIORS.
NOW WE ARE READY.
Several hours later...


MY SCOUTS REPORT THAT SEVERAL BATTALIONS OF ORCS ARE ACTING AS A BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN US, AND THE HEART OF THE DATARAN FORCES.
WE SOFTEN THEM UP WITH ARCHERS, AND THEN SMASH A HOLE THROUGH THEIR RANKS WITH THE CAVALRY
HOW QUICKLY CAN YOU GET YOUR ARCHERS INTO POSITION, IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE HIDE THE ELVEN ELEMENT IN OUR FORCES FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.
WE ALREADY ARE
FIRST VOLLEY!!! PREPARE TO FIRE!!!
PREPARE YOUR MEN TO ENGAGE THE DATARANS. THESE ORCS WILL ALL FALL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF THE ELVEN STORM.

THWOOM
HROO?
PPP

WE HAVE THEM ON THE RUN - I SUGGEST WE TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION.
AGREED

The orders are given, and at once, the combined armies of the Eastern Kingdoms throw themselves against the enemy that would come to conquer them.
Seemingly totally unprepared for such a bold attack, and with their attention still, actually focused against the threat of a demon army [illegible]
The Datarans fall briefly into disorder during the first charge.
Heartened by their enemies' hesitation, the armies of the East push harder still into the heart of the Vampire horde itself.

Little do our heroes know of what lies in wait for them on the other side of the mountains...
For even as our heroes push the enemy from the high ground, a surprise lies in ambush just below the ground they have most recently gained.
YOUR LITTLE SURPRISE SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED TESSAN.
A MINOR CHALLENGE WHEN FACING AN INFERIOR FOE.

OUR COMRADES REQUIRE ASSISTANCE... COME ZEPH
TODAY, YOU BECOME A WARRIOR.
THE MORE TIME THAT PASSES, THE MORE UNDERSTANDING I GAIN OF THIS ARMOR.
NO...
A TRAP... TESSAN'S DOING NO DOUBT-A MILITARY DEFEAT IS LIKELY INEVITABLE AT THIS POINT

IT IS A CONDUIT FOR MAGICAL ENERGY... A VERY POWERFUL ONE
I CAN FEEL IT URGING ME FORTH..
IT?
AND SO DO I.
ATRELEGIS! WAIT!

-EH?
SORRY TO HAVE TO DO THIS TO YOJ GENERAL..
I KNEW YOJR GREAT GRANDFATHER.
THUD!
HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
WHOP!

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS HE DOING???
I DON'T KNOW...
We can only hope that,

......
GODS... DOES HE PLAN TO TAKE ON THE ENTIRE HORDE HIMSELF?

MALAGEN!!
SHOW YOURSELF!!!
IS THIS THE POWER THAT HAS DRIVEN MALAGEN TO SUCH EXTREME MEASURES TO CONTAIN?

THE PRODIGAL SON RETURNS--
HE SOUNDS... IRRITATED-
NO MATTER-
LET THE TRAITOR COME.
I WILL SHOW HIM WHAT TRUE POWER IS.
To be continued

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# WARLANDS

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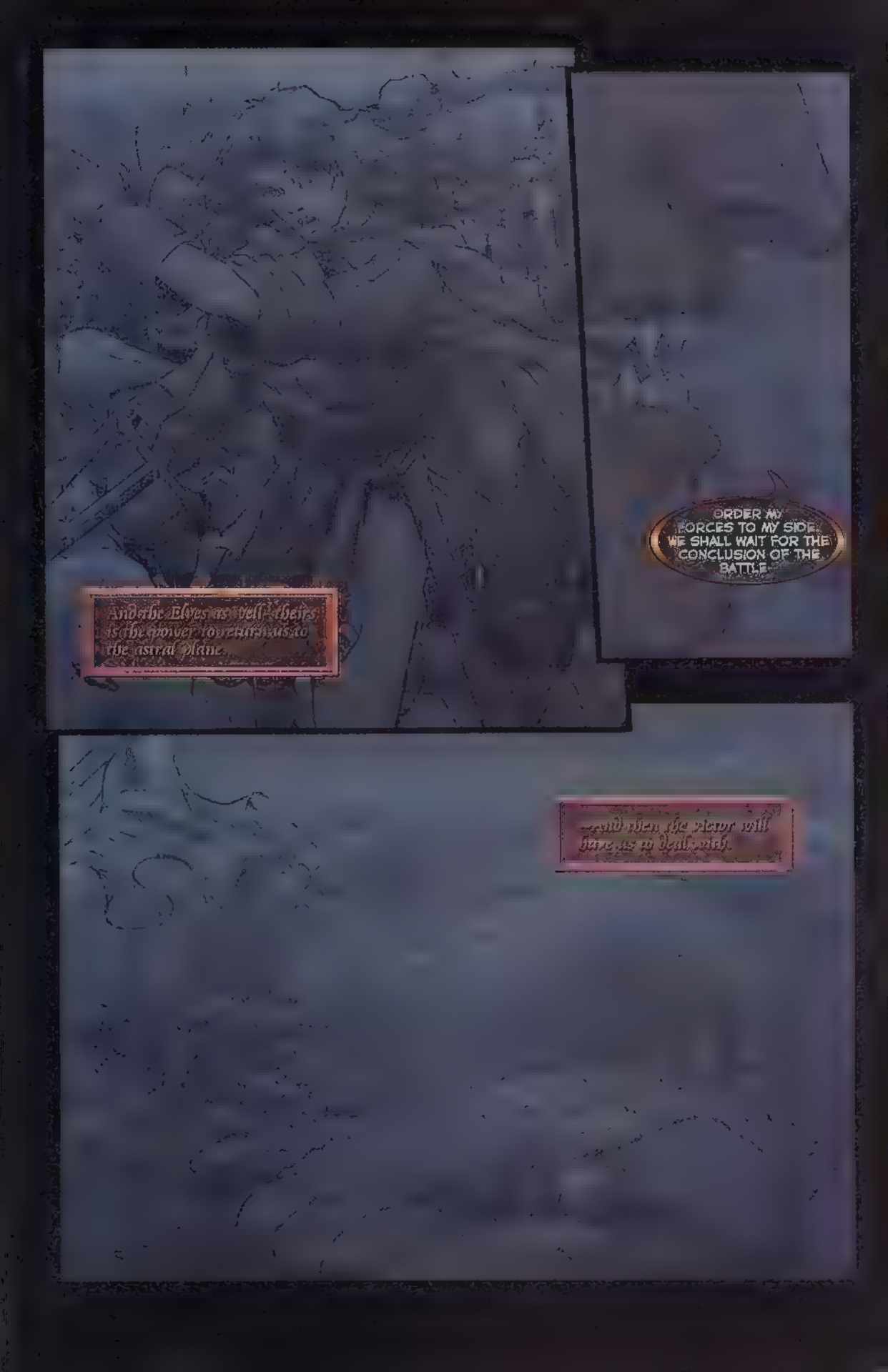
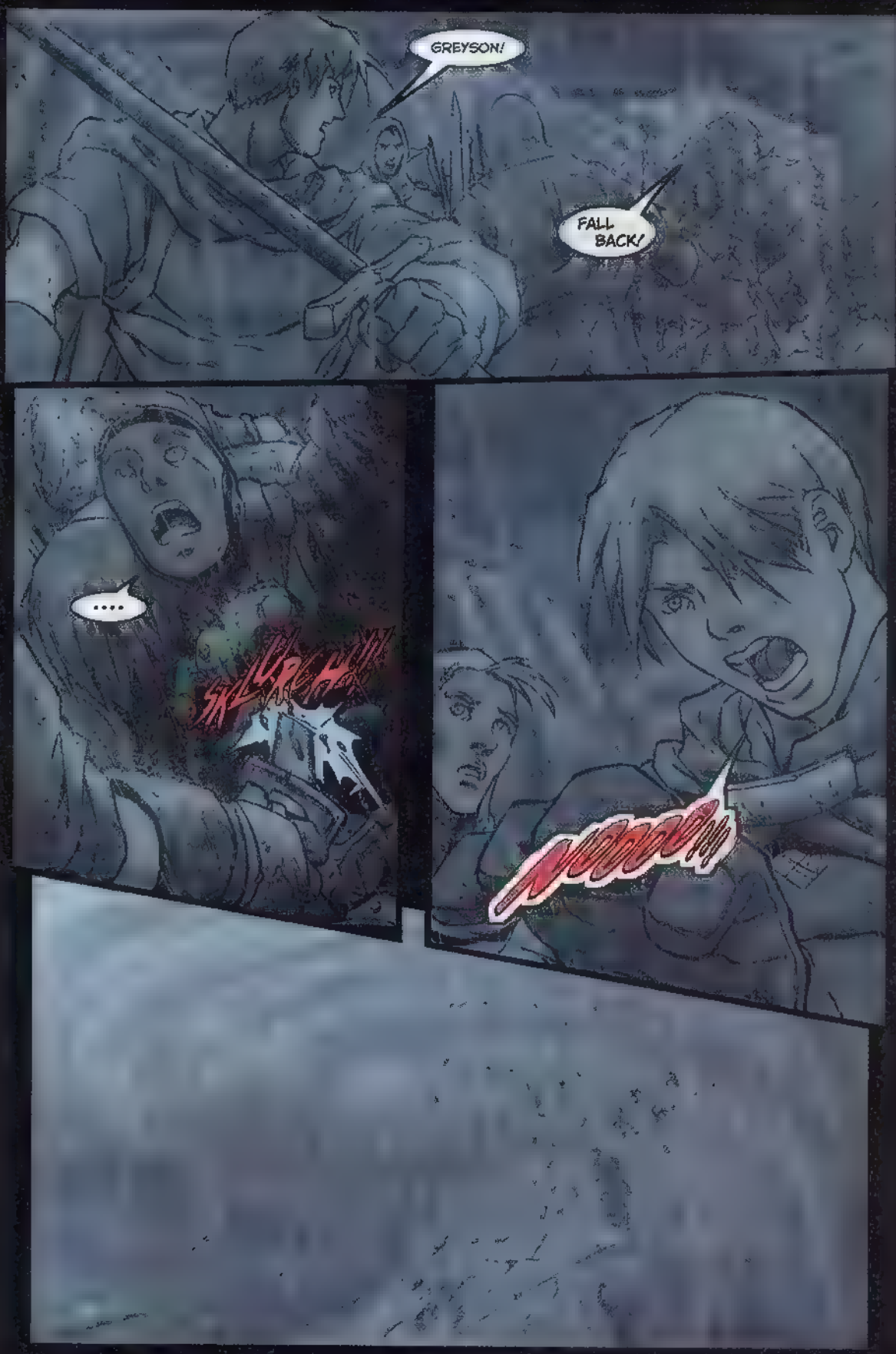
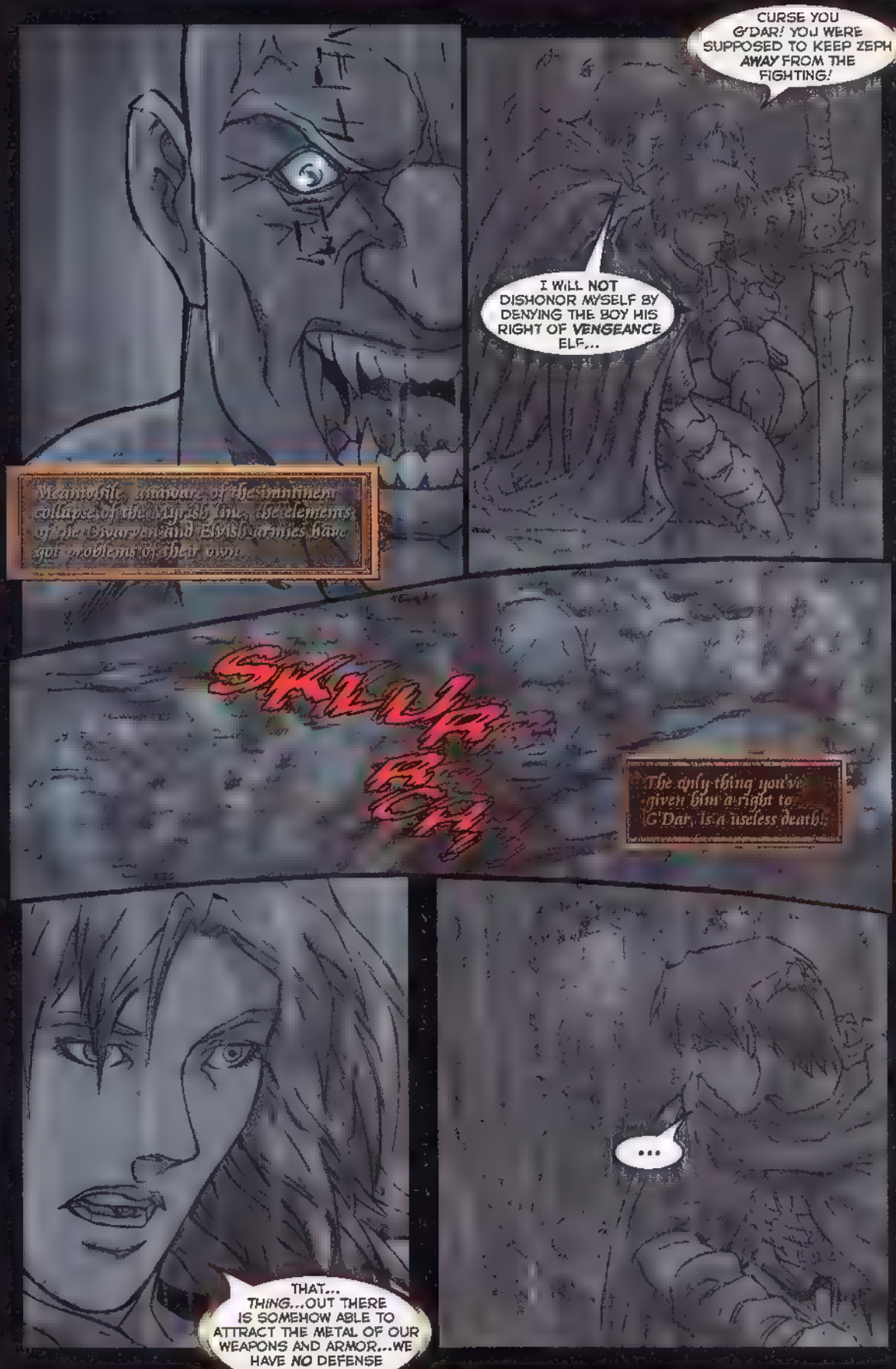
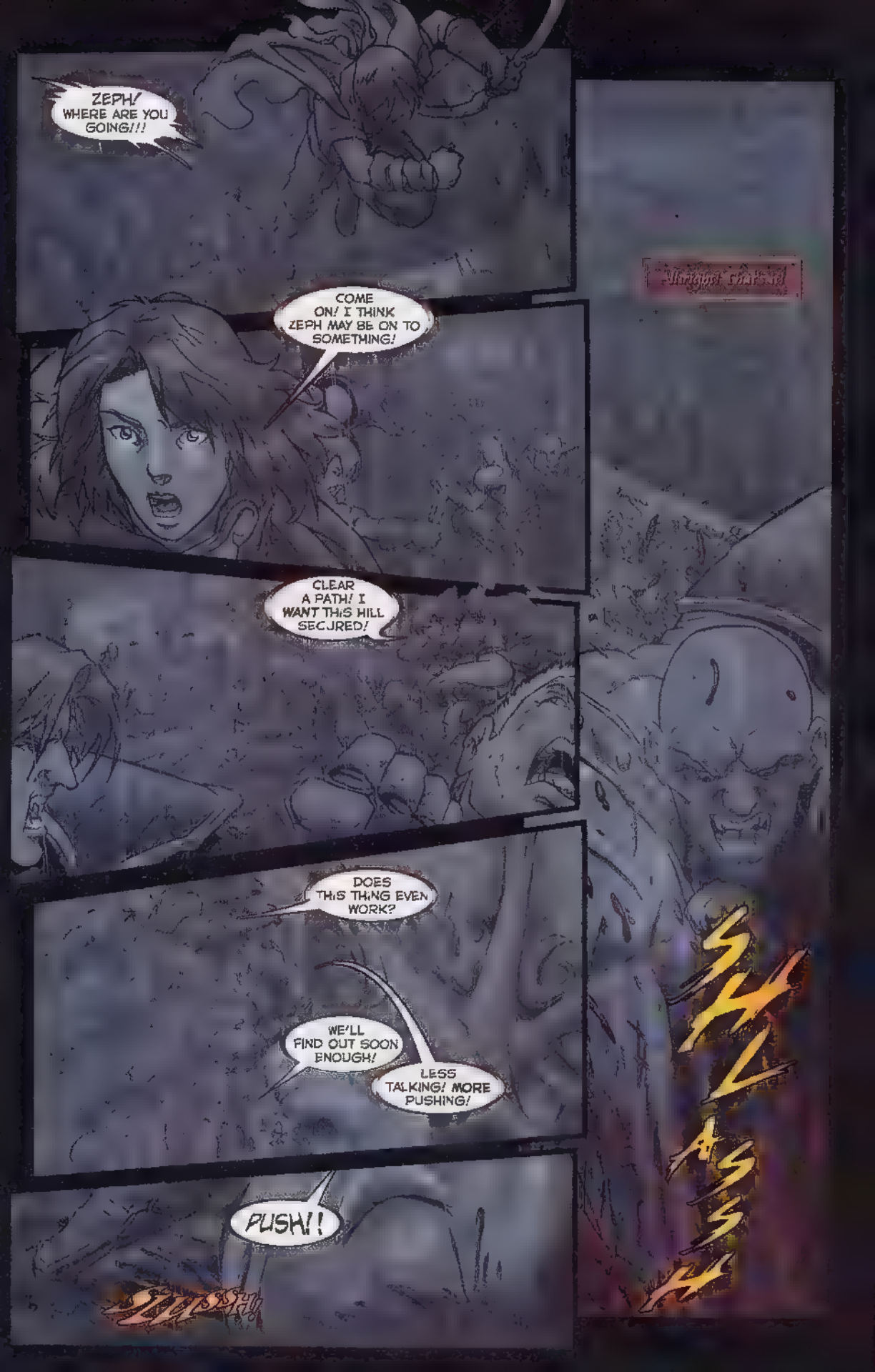
When we last left our heroes, they were engaged in a desperate final battle against Malagen and the Dataran Horde. In the heat of the battle however, both sides have for the moment, forgotten about a mutual enemy, along the sidelines...
IT APPEARS THE HUMANS HAVE SECURED THE DARKLYTE ARMOR MASTER. NOW THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN YOUR TRUE FORM, WRESTING CONTROL OF IT SHOULD BE A SIMPLE MATTER...
PERHAPS. IF WE ARE TO TAKE CONTROL OF IT NOW, WE STILL HAVE THE DATARANS TO DEAL WITH...


And the Elves as well - theirs is the power to retreat into the astral plane.
ORDER MY FORCES TO MY SIDE. WE SHALL WAIT FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE.
...and then the victor will have us to deal with.

SLASH
TIGHTEN THE RANKS! WE HOLD THEM HERE!
DIN'S BLOOD...
RETREAT!!!!


GREYSON!
FALL BACK!
....
SKLURCH!
NOOOO!!!


CURSE YOU G'DAR! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO KEEP ZEPH AWAY FROM THE FIGHTING!
I WILL NOT DISHONOR MYSELF BY DENYING THE BOY HIS RIGHT OF VENGEANCE ELF...
Meanwhile, unaware of the imminent collapse of the Myrish line, the elements of the Dwarven and Elvish armies have got problems of their own.
SKLUK
The only thing you've given him a right to, G'Dar, is a useless death.
...
THAT... THING...OUT THERE IS SOMEHOW ABLE TO ATTRACT THE METAL OF OUR WEAPONS AND ARMOR...WE HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST IT!

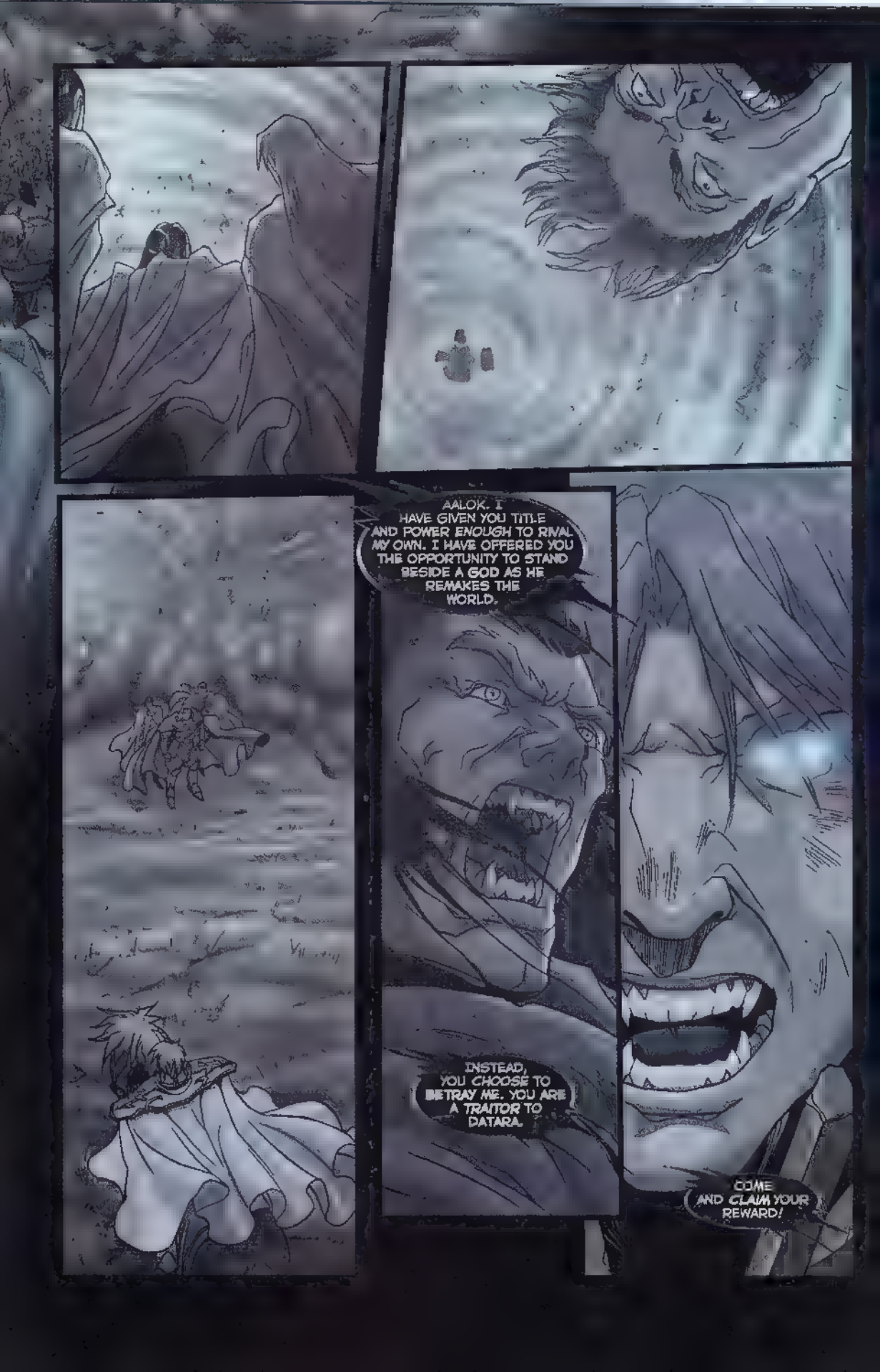

ZEPH! WHERE ARE YOU GOING!!!
COME ON! I THINK ZEPH MAY BE ON TO SOMETHING!
CLEAR A PATH! I WANT THIS HILL SECURED!
DOES THIS THING EVEN WORK?
WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH!
LESS TALKING! MORE PUSHING!
PUSH!!
SHASSH

I NEED AN ENGINEERING CREW TO SET UP THE SHOT - WE'RE ONLY GOING TO GET ONE CHANCE AT THIS!
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY-
UUHHHH
HASN'T ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU--?
KKRRR!
THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS...
...IS A STRAIGHT LINE.

I CAN'T HOLD THIS UP FOREVER....
FOR DELEZAR...
GHKK!!
WHOOSH!

KROONNG!
?
GGGRRGGGH!!!
....

IT APPEARS WE WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE WITHOUT SHOGRAN'S AID...
NO MATTER.
The traitor is mine!


AALOK. I HAVE GIVEN YOU TITLE AND POWER ENOUGH TO RIVAL MY OWN. I HAVE OFFERED YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO STAND BESIDE A GOD AS HE REMAKES THE WORLD.
INSTEAD, YOU CHOOSE TO BETRAY ME. YOU ARE A TRAITOR TO DATARA.
COME AND CLAIM YOUR REWARD!

SHWWIP!

KLANG!

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO **BETTER** THAN THAT SORCEROR!

FOOL! DO YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU CAN DEFEAT ME WITH SUCH FEEBLE *PHYSICAL* ATTACKS? YOU ARE *TOO* YOUNG IN YOUR NEWFOUND POWER...

PERHAPS, BUT THE DARK.YTE ARMOR WILL ABSORB YOUR POWER *REGARDLESS* OF MY OWN MASTERY OF IT...

WOOSH

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME-

IS THAT YOUR PLAN THEN? TO OCCUPY ME WHILE YOUR PRECIOUS TRINKET DRAINS ME OF MY POWER?

KANG

YOU COULD PLAY THIS *GAME* OF YOURS FOR CENTURIES, AND STILL, YOUR PATHETIC ARMOR WOULD NOT STEAL ENOUGH OF MY POWER TO UNDO ME.

I CREATED YOU AALOK, AND NOW I WILL DESTROY YOU.

YOU COULD HAVE STOOD AT *MY* SIDE AS I CHALLENGED THE *GODS* THEMSELVES. INSTEAD YOU DIE FOR WHATEVER FLEETING, SCRAPS OF *HUMANITY* YOU'VE MANAGED TO RECLAIM.

YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE END OF THE WORLD...

SURRENDER MAALGEN! IT IS *PROPHESIZED** THAT I WILL DEFEAT YOU!

WRONG! *ATRELEGIS* WAS PROPHESIZED TO DEFEAT *ME*, AND HE DIED ON *THIS* FIELD BY *MY OWN* HAND CENTURIES AGO!*

YOU ARE *AALOK* NOW! A SON OF DATARA, AND A TRAITOR! TAKE WHATEVER MEASURE OF *MY* POWER YOU WISH, BUT YOUR POWER IS *LINKED* TO MINE, WEAKEN ME, AND YOU ONLY *DIMINISH* YOURSELF!

THE ARMOR WILL *NEVER* BE THE INSTRUMENT OF *MY* DEFEAT WHILE YOU LIVE!

UHHHH...

*See Warhinds issue #0 and #12 for details.

It can't end like this...
The armor will never be the instrument of my defeat whole you live...
HMPH...

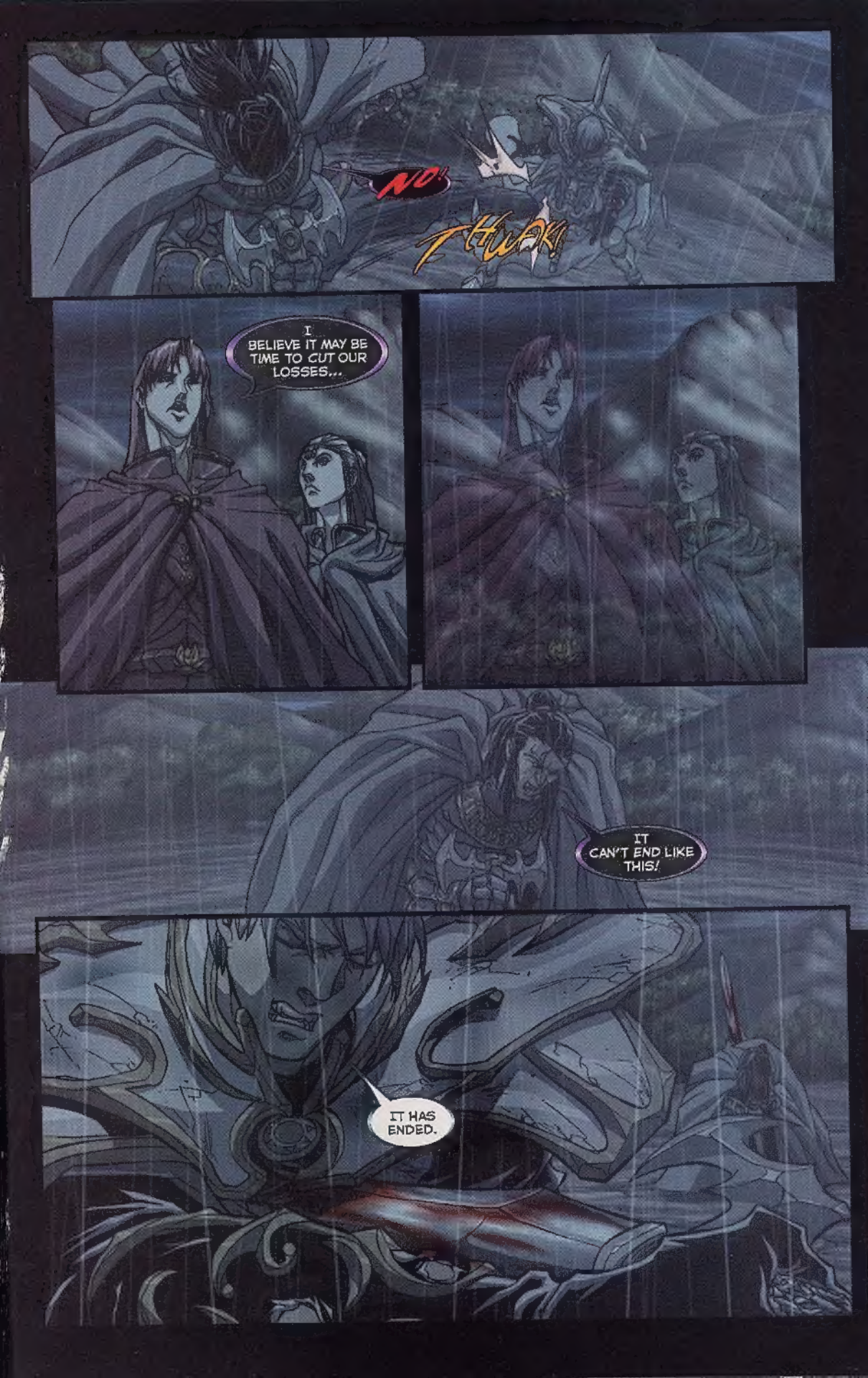
IT'S OVER...

SKLURCH

HE'S FAILED...

BEHOLD MORTALS! LOOK UPON THE *CORPSE* OF YOUR *'SAVIOR'* AND WEEP!

PRESS THE ATTACK! THEY ARE ALL BUT DEF...
SKLURCH
GGLLLGG
YOU WERE RIGHT...I COULD NEVER DEFEAT YOU WHILE I LIVED.
BUT AS LIFE SLIPS FROM THIS BODY, SO TOO DOES YOUR HOLD ON THIS SOUL- YOU ARE UNDONE 'FATHER'...


NO!
THWAK!
I BELIEVE IT MAY BE TIME TO CUT OUR LOSSES...
IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS!
IT HAS ENDED.

To be continued

in 'Warlands Special : Three Stories'

pat lee
adrian tsang
alvin lee

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